Catholic Ritual and Tradition

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Foreword

The late Father Bridgett in his book called "The Ritual of the New Testament" published a rich store of excellent matter, useful both to Catholics and to non-Catholics. Yet it may fairly be doubted whether his work, written more than fifty years ago, is likely as it stands to attract a wide circle of readers. It contains a good deal of controversy with adversaries almost unknown to the average man or woman of the present day, and is couched in the literary style of the time in which it was written.

Hence I have attempted in the following pages to reduce it to a smaller compass, by omitting those developments which would appear not to be of much interest in our own day. I only hope that I have not done injustice to the author's arguments and illustrations by thus shortening them.

The question of Ritualism was a burning one in the days when the book was published: whereas now there is a marked tendency towards impressive and symbolic Ritual in the worship of God. Still, even today, Puritanism retains its hold on some minds. I trust this little book will help to dispel objections from such quarters as these.

I feel, moreover, that it may be of use to our own people by helping them to appreciate more fully the ceremonies of Holy Church. There is always some danger of routine, and of a mechanical way of assisting at what we witness so often. Yet, if we will only take the trouble to penetrate to the hidden depths of the Church's Ritual, we shall find it a veritable mine of good things.

Frequent use is made in the worship of the Catholic Church of symbolic ceremonies and material objects. Some of these are expressive - the body expressing by word, movement or gesture the sentiments and thoughts of the soul. Others are impressive - designed to impress religious truths on the. mind or to awaken religious feelings within the heart. And some again we may call effective - these are the Sacraments instituted by Our Lord to effect in the soul what they denote. Thus, the external ablution by water poured on the head in Baptism effects in the soul the washing away

of the stain of Original Sin.

Many of these material objects and ceremonies used in the Church's Liturgy and Sacramental System are quite obvious in their signification: others need some little study. The lighted candles clearly convey the notion of the light of Faith; the smoke of the incense, prayer rising to Heaven. But the elaborate ceremonial of a High Mass, and still more of the consecration of a Church, can be understood only by a well-instructed Catholic. Everyone who has the opportunity should make a study of the Church's Ritual: it will well repay his labours by imparting to the Services at which he assists an absorbing interest.

All things of earth received some form of consecration through the Incarnation. Nature could never be quite the same again. Flowers, trees, birds, rivers, fields, mountains - all had been gazed upon and admired by the eyes of the Son of God. The produce of the earth and of the sea had been used as His very food - to build up the bone and muscle of His sacred Body. In many a wonderful parable had material things exemplified the spiritual truths of His divine teaching. Surely, then, it is most seeming that the Christian Church, the extension of the Incarnation, should requisition all these for her service. Thus, water, oil, salt, palms, wax, and the like are solemnly blessed by her, as she prays for grace on the souls of her children who use them devoutly. Even things used in pagan worship she would turn without danger of superstition to the service of her Master. Father Thurston writes: - "We need not shrink from admitting that candles, like incense and lustral water, were commonly employed in pagan worship and in the rites of the dead. But the Church from a very early period took them into her service, just as she adopted many other things indifferent in themselves, which seemed proper to enhance the splendour of religious ceremonial. We must not forget that most of these adjuncts to worship, like music, lights, perfumes, ablutions, floral decorations, canopies, fans, screens, bells, vestments, etc., were not identified with any idolatrous cult in particular. They were common to almost all cults. They are, in fact, part of the natural language of mystical expression, and such things belong quite as much to secular ceremonial as they do to religion. The salute of an assigned number of guns, a tribute which is paid by a warship to the flag of a foreign

power, is just as much or as little worthy to be described as superstitious as the display of an assigned number of candles upon the altar at High Mass."

Now, the first chapters explain the principles on which the Ritual of the Church is based, and show how consonant with our twofold nature of body and soul is the use of this Ritual.

The second part of the work treats of Catholic Tradition, especially where this bears upon Ritual. Father Bridgett shows very clearly the insufficiency of the Bible without Tradition to interpret it. His words should not only explain our position to what is called the "Protestant mind," but should show Catholics how wisely Our Lord has provided for the transmission of those truths which He came down from Heaven to teach the world.

Some may wish that all controversy had been avoided in this little book: especially those who maintain the modern adage, "one Religion is as good as another." But I do not think anyone could thoughtfully follow Father Bridgett's lucid argumentation, and still stand by that principle of indifference. Christ established one Church only, with a divine commission to teach the world and a divine promise to guide her always in all truth. He was God as well as man: consequently, His teaching was no mere philosophy of life which man could take or leave, but a divine law of life with its sanction of eternal reward or eternal condemnation. "Go and teach all nations to observe whatsoever I have taught you: he that believes shall be saved, he that will not believe shall be condemned." Whichever that one Church may be, none other opposed to her can Christ have established. Truth cannot contradict itself - it is one; while error is manifold.

Now, we Catholics have the greatest love for our non-Catholic brethren. And, precisely because of this love, we deprecate those systems of Religion which, we are convinced, have deprived their adherents of so much of Christian Truth and Christian Grace. We see on every side Protestantism departing more and more from the old traditional Christianity, losing its hold on the people, splitting up into a thousand conflicting sects. It is not built on the solid rock which Our Divine Lord laid as the foundation of the Christian Religion - the rock of. Peter. Consequently, it is as the house built

on the sands, the shifting sands of human opinion - it is becoming shattered before the onslaughts of the waves and the winds, before the storm of modern unbelief. "What is the use of the Churches? Christianity has failed." This is the cry we hear so often!

All this must touch the true Catholic to the quick. He must yearn that others may see as he sees, and as all Christendom saw for so many centuries. He must desire, in his charity, that others may enjoy the peace which is his. " All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54). He must pray that there may be an end to all this chaos, and loss of the supernatural sense - by a return to the one Church of Jesus Christ, to which alone has been promised unity, indefectibility, infallibility. Thus, the more truly a Catholic loves his fellows, the more zealously must he strive to make them Catholics as well.

Father Bridgett would have been the last to enter into controversy for its own sake. His object was to refute some of the charges brought against Catholic Ritual and Tradition, and then to compare system with system. All that we can ask of him is that he should be fair and courteous in dealing with his adversaries. This he was in a high degree. His was a sweet and kindly disposition.

Finally, I trust that my presentation of Father Bridgett's book in a more modern form will induce the reader to read his other works: "The History of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain," "The Dowry of Mary," "Blunders and Forgeries," as well as his standard biographies of "Blessed Thomas More" and "Blessed John Fisher." I have kept fairly closely to the author's own words, only here and there interposing a casual remark or addition of my own. I shall be more than pleased if my summary leads any readers to peruse the full work from which it is taken.

Introduction, by Father Kent, O.S.C.

Like the Epistles of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, the late Father Bridgett's suggestive study of the Ritual of the New Testament is now extant in three distinct forms. For the original book entitled "In Spirit and in Truth" - itself the outcome of a sermon on that text - has been subjected in turn to the diverse processes of expansion and abridgement. But in this case the expansion was the work of the author himself, who published, in 1873, "The Ritual of the New Testament. An Essay on the Principles and Origin of Catholic Ritual in reference to the New Testament: being a revised and enlarged edition of a volume entitled 'In Spirit and in Truth.'" And now, some fifty years after the appearance of the book in its original form, the extended work has been abbreviated and adapted to the needs of the present day by the sympathetic hands of Father Bridgett's brother in religion, Father Francis Prime, C.SS.R.

As Father Bridgett's book contained many references to contemporary controversy on the subject of "Ritualism" and answers to forgotten champions of the hour, it is an advantage to have the matter which is of more permanent interest separated from the rest, and brought within the reach of present day readers. It might seem, indeed, that the book must have been superseded by the numerous important works on the Ritual which have seen the light in recent years. For liturgical studies have made rapid strides in the past fifty years. Some lost documents have been recovered. A careful comparison of the various ancient rites of East and West has made it easier to distinguish the main lines of the original Liturgy from later developments and local modifications. And further help has been found in following up Bickell's investigations into the connection of the primitive Christian Liturgy with the Jewish Ritual of the Paschal Sacrifice. For these reasons it is likely enough that a critical and historical study of the Ritual of the Early Church written some fifty years since must needs be superseded by these later labours and investigations.

But it is far otherwise with such a book as Father Bridgett's "Ritual of the New Testament" which deals not with matters of detail but with broad general principles. The main thesis of such a book

remains unaffected by recent researches and discoveries. The questions it raised will still present themselves to many bewildered readers in our own days. And Father Bridgett's plain answers and telling arguments still retain their freshness and point. Does the text of the New Testament, as the simple Protestant supposes, really condemn anything in the nature of symbolical or ceremonial worship? Or does it, on the contrary, support the Catholic practice; and, though containing no ceremonial laws like those of Leviticus, lay down the fundamental principles which underlie the Sacred Liturgy? These are, surely, questions which may be considered apart from any detailed study of Liturgical History. And they will have a practical interest for others than liturgical students and antiquarians. Father Bridgett's method of treating these questions may help to remove some difficulties felt by non-Catholic readers, and enable them to see that there is a close connection between Catholic Ritual and the text of the New Testament. And for many, we imagine, this study may serve as an illuminating object-lesson on the intimate relations and concordant testimony of the Holy Scripture and Tradition.

One point well brought out is the fact that Christian worship was practised for many years before the New Testament was written. And, thus, its ordering and establishment was necessarily the work of oral teaching to which the brief notices on this subject in the Acts and in the Apostolic Epistles are, for the most part, incidental allusions. We are reminded, moreover, that in the New Testament itself we have pointed references to oral teaching whereof no details are given. In Acts 1:3, for example, we read how Our Lord "showed himself alive after his Passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the Kingdom of God." And it is suggested that at this time He gave those fuller instructions regarding sacred rites and sacraments which form the basis of liturgical Tradition.

It may be remarked that the view here suggested has an interesting illustration in an ancient liturgical document which was first brought to light some five and twenty years after the appearance of "The Ritual of the New Testament." By an ingenious historical fiction, the compilers of the so-called "Apostolical Constitutions" put their ecclesiastical and liturgical decrees into the mouths of the

Apostles. But in another ancient document of the same kind, the Syriac "Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ," first published in 1899 from a Mossul manuscript, a yet bolder device is adopted. For here the ecclesiastical ordinances and liturgical prayers are cast in the form of a discourse delivered by Our Lord to His disciples after His Resurrection. In this historical fiction some later developments of local liturgical rites are thrown back to an earlier date. Yet, after all, in its main lines, the ancient Christian Liturgy does indeed come down from the beginning. And, rightly understood, the old Syriac work represents, however partially and imperfectly, the real origin of the Ritual of the New Testament.

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Saint Mary of the Angels
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A General View of Catholic Ritual

We are met at the very outset of our investigation of the value of Ritual by a fact which to certain minds may seem an insuperable difficulty, accustomed as they are to the view of Scripture as the sole source of knowledge of things divine. There is no formal statement in the New Testament of any system of worship peculiar to Christ's followers. We find brief indications of some new rites, not gathered into a code, but scattered here and there. We catch glimpses of the assemblies of the first disciples for common worship - but there is no description' given for the instruction of future generations. We note the absence from the New Testament of any book like that of Leviticus. The Hebrews were minutely instructed by God how to worship Him, and they were given an elaborate ceremonial. Are Christians to have no system of Ritual, because none is recorded in the Holy Scriptures?

Those who assume that we have no authentic source of information besides the New Testament - and that it was written with the intention of supplying future ages with all necessary knowledge of divine things - will probably answer in the affirmative. But we find no minute code of morals in the pages of the New Testament corresponding to what we read in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Does this mean that good works are less important to Christians than to Jews, and are intended to occupy a less prominent place in their religious system?

Or, consider the importance of Sunday observance, which is recognised by all Christians - and the almost total silence of the Scriptures regarding it. What sanction can be produced from the New Testament for this institution? Not one direct and clear passage, but a few obscure. and disputed allusions! Dr Hessey (Bampton Lectures, 1860) says, "It is, I think, impossible to estimate the comparative importance of an institution in the ancient Church by the number of times in which it is mentioned. So far from considering the infrequency of exhortation to keep the Lord's Day to be an argument that it was not held by the primitive Christians to be a Scriptural institution, I conceive it an argument which tells just the other way. I should have been surprised to find more said about

it."

It is a serious error to *count* words instead of *weighing* them. We must inquire *what* is said and not *how much*. Again, in historical documents, we cannot safely conclude from silence until we have weighed the circumstances. We shall see that there were circumstances which well explain the partial silence of the divine writers on matters of Ritual. Hence, an observance may be of the utmost importance, of the most intimate and constant influence on the Christian life, and yet occupy a very small space in the inspired records. When the living observance is before our eyes, expressions, allusions, even words, become luminous, which, to those who do not know what we know, are without significance.

Moreover, the Jewish Ritual was eminently prophetic and typical. And a prophetic Ritual can only come from Revelation. One of the proofs of the Christian faith is that its facts were prefigured in the ceremonies of a people who did not foresee them. The Jew performed a Ritual of which he had not the key - we possess the key: we find that Ritual, in its minutest circumstances, typical of Christian facts and doctrines. The Jew could not invent such Ritual, he received it by revelation. But such is not the Ritual of the Catholic Church. The truth is now fully revealed; and however numerous or elaborate are our ceremonies, they either embody truths known to the Church, recall facts of her past history, or express thoughts and feelings of which she is conscious. Such a Ritual does not require an express and minute revelation.

Again, the Jewish Church was national and transitory - the Christian Church was to be Catholic, adapted to all times, all nations, all circumstances. We do not conceive how a revealed code of Ritual could have been given her.

I will merely say now, by anticipation, that the Divine Founder of the Catholic Church either personally or by His Apostles established the essential and immutable rites of His religion. Then, He gave to His Church a spirit of worship and conferred on her an authority by which - on the basis which He had instituted - she has developed, according to circumstances, that full system of Ceremonial Worship which she now possesses. Moreover He sanctioned in His own life the general principles of Catholic worship, such as symbolic actions,

the employment in God's service of what is beautiful and costly, and the use of external means of impressing the soul through the senses. These points we shall consider, later, more fully.

Another difficulty I merely touch upon here. Against the Puritan abhorrence of ceremony, as unspiritual, I ask - if the Holy Spirit can make use of a psalm or a hymn to convey spiritual impressions - why not also of a procession? In what respect are modulations of the voice more spiritual than genuflexions and prostrations of the body? The blunder that the action of God's Spirit must needs be immediate and individual, that He cannot, or will not, make use of what has a material element, leads to many modern misconceptions. "The grace of God cannot be connected with sacramental rites," cries the Puritan. "The truth of God refuses to be imprisoned in the dead phrases of Scripture," echoes the Rationalist. "What has the free love of God to do with prescribed works?" chimes in the Antinomian.

Impressive Ritual

Among the characteristics of Catholic worship, that which attracts the attention and criticism of strangers, most easily, is magnificence or splendour. Splendour has a legitimate place in worship - it is lawful and good at times to make impressions on the soul through the senses.

However, no Catholic ever considered magnificence as an essential quality of ceremonial. We know well that true spiritual worship may exist without grand or imposing ceremonies, and often without rites of any kind - and that art and splendour may sometimes be unaccompanied by any interior piety. Some of the truest worshippers that God ever found poured out the homage of their hearts to Him "in deserts, in mountains, in dens, and in caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:38). English, Scotch, and Irish Catholics would be the last to deny this fact, since the persecution of their fellow-countrymen reduced them, for many generations, to this very state.

The question is not whether these things can be separated, but whether they are naturally united. Does interior piety naturally seek to ally itself to external ceremonial? Does external ceremonial foster interior piety? Mr Ruskin seemed to think so, when he said that the Gothic Cathedral "with every stone that is laid on its solemn. walls, raises some human heart a step nearer heaven."

The Catholic theory may be briefly stated thus: In its ordinary state, the soul is weighed down by the senses: the multitude of objects ever acting on the senses enthral the soul, and prevent it from soaring to things spiritual and divine. "The bewitching attraction of trifles obscureth the good." It requires a great effort to break this thraldom; and this effort is facilitated by the impressions made on the senses through the ceremonial of public worship. The senses are thus used against the senses, not to ensnare and captivate the soul, naturally free - but to set free the soul, naturally captive. The great pageant of things temporal, ever before the eyes, is, for a time, effaced by the imagery of things invisible; spiritual images take the place of natural images. Thus the soul, escaping from its bondage, has a glimpse of the Eternal Spirit, and bows herself before Him in

spiritual worship.

And so, too, if the senses are used to release the spirit from its captivity to sense, the imagination is enlisted on the side of truth - to break the fascinating spell of error which may act on it. Reason may discover that things visible and transitory are but trifles - yet those visible and tangible trifles have a deluding and enchanting power over the soul, from which reason in vain strives to free itself. Now Faith creates a ceremonial, a living embodiment of its own thoughts and feelings, which helps reason in the contest against the treachery of sense. This is the worship of the kingdom, not of this world, yet in the world, which our Lord God has set up to fight against that world which He has condemned.

Wordsworth exactly states the Catholic philosophy of ceremonial in the following lines:

> "*Cast off your bonds*, awake, arise -
> And for no transient ecstasies!
> What else can mean the visual plea
> Of still or moving imagery?
> Alas, the sanctities combined
> By art to *unsensualise* the mind
> Decay and languish: or, as creeds
> And humours change, are spurn'd like weeds;
> The solemn rites, the awful forms
> Founder amid fanatic storms;
> The priests are from their altars thrust;
> Temples are levell'd with the dust."
> - *Devotional Incitements*

Yet a Protestant writer affirms: "Our Lord's whole life on earth was conducted in the very simplest and plainest manner. Should we not try to imitate His walk, if we are really anxious, for religion's sake, to act rightly?" And again - "He was about to declare that all such visibilities had served their purpose, and were about to come to an end. Who can imagine Him taking part in such garish pageantries aS are now presented to us by men who would be accounted eminently reverential and Christian?"

And still more pertinently - "We once saw High Mass performed in

the grand old Cathedral of Cologne, and as a spectacle it was unique. And we once saw the same performance in Rheims Cathedral. Ten years intervened between the two exhibitions, but one thought pervaded our minds and dominated all else on both occasions. How could all this ever have come out of the simple story of the Gospels, or from the Acts of the Apostles?"

Now, such writers seem to forget that Christ's life has its glories as well as its humiliations. They have considered our Lord as *Worshipper*, but neglected to contemplate Him as *the Object of worship*. They have seen that He worshipped in poverty, but they have not seen that He was worshipped in magnificence. They have sought to draw an absolute rule from the poverty of Jesus, which was a passing dispensation for our sake, while they ought to have seen that the true rule for Christian worship should be drawn from His glories, which are eternal. Let us consider briefly this glorious phase of our Divine Master's earthly life.

Splendour in our Lord's Life. How was He first introduced into the world? The shepherds were keeping their night-watches in the fields of Bethlehem, when an angel stood by them, and "the brightness of God shone around them, and they feared with a great fear." And "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest." Again, a miraculous star led the Eastern sages to the Crib, and finding the Divine Child, "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and falling down they adored Him, and opening their treasures, offered Him gifts - gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

This is God's own Ritual of the Nativity. Is there here no appeal to the senses? Is there no splendour, no magnificence? Were the great fear of the shepherds and the great joy of the Magi mere sensuous excitement? The very angels take visible form and use human voices in order to appeal to men's bodily senses, and so lift them up in a human way to share angelic joy.

Nor are these miraculous appeals to sense confined to the birth of our Redeemer. They are the beginning of a series which glorifies His public ministry, His death and resurrection.

After His Baptism by Saint John Baptist we read: "He forthwith

came out of the water, and lo! the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God as a dove descending and coming upon Him; and behold a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son: in whom I am well pleased." The Spirit of God not only causes the material sky to seem to open, as if that were His dwelling place, but He speaks with a human voice, and deigns to appear under the shape and emblem of a dove.

Again, in the Transfiguration, "His face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow." Bright clouds and white glistening robes would, in modern language, be termed sensational. So indeed they were - and were intended by God to work powerfully on the senses, the imagination, and the feelings of the witnesses. "They fell upon their face, and were very much afraid."

Now let us turn to the Passion. There was darkness over the earth "from the sixth to the ninth hour." The veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom; the earth quaked, the rocks were split, the tombs opened. Most certainly these were signs that appealed to the senses and to the feelings. They were God's own Ritual of the Passion. Then, at the Resurrection, there was again "a great earthquake"; an angel appeared with a countenance as the lightning and with raiment as snow. Likewise at the Ascension we are told of the apparition of "two men in white garments."

But was all this because men were still carnal, and the Holy Ghost had not yet come upon them? Would the descent of the Holy Spirit be accompanied by purely spiritual phenomena? It is enough to refer to the "sound from heaven as of a mighty wind," and the "parted tongues as it were of fire.' And on that day, Saint Peter quoted the prophecy of Joel describing the nature of the new spiritual Church of Christ - "It shall come to pass, in the last days, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath - blood and fire and vapour of smoke" (Acts 2:17,19). Sensational elements certainly!

God Himself made use of appeals to the sense and imagination far more striking, more splendid, more gorgeous than any which have been at the command of the Catholic Church. What, indeed, are silken vestments, jewelled mitres, peals of the organ, blaze of

candles, clouds of incense, etc., compared with the bright clouds, glistening raiment, heavenly voices, dazzling splendours, earthquakes, and mighty winds which are some of the elements of God's Ritual?

It is Carlyle, I think, who says that an argument is not complete until we have not only refuted the error of our opponent, but shown also how he came by 'it. How then, do Protestants come by their theory of simplicity of worship, after all the Divine Ceremonial we have recorded?

They take a very partial view of our Lord's life - they consider Him as a Worshipper only, not as One worshipped; and they forget that He was a Worshipper under entirely exceptional circumstances. Why will they not allow us to draw any conclusion from the nature of the worship our Divine Master offered in the Temple, or the ceremonies at which He assisted? They rightly say all this was transitory; the Old Law was about to be abolished. Similarly, to the objection raised by the simplicity of Apostolic worship, we answer that, too, was transitory and exceptional. The first Christians were poor and persecuted - any splendour of worship was impossible, just as it was impossible to our own persecuted ancestors of a few generations ago. When a man omits an action which he is physically unable to perform, we may doubt whether he does so from choice or compulsion. But if he is no sooner free than he does what he before omitted, we may then judge that he would have done it before had he not been prevented. This is exactly the case of the Christian Church. No sooner was the pressure of persecution removed than in every country throughout the world she developed her worship with the same splendour.

There is a strange perplexing contrast, at first sight, between the glorious Christ of prophecy and the humble Christ of the Gospel. And there is a similar contrast between the humble Christ who worships in the Gospel and the glorious Christ who is worshipped in the Catholic Church. The first contrast scandalised the Jews, the second scandalises the Protestant. But the attentive reader of the Gospels will see contrast' again between the Christ persecuted by Herod and the Christ worshipped by the Magi; the Christ of Thabor and the Christ of Calvary. Yet these are not two Christs, but one

Christ; and to know that one Christ truly we must know Him in His glories as well as in His abasements. We must know Him, not only in His voluntary humiliation, but in the splendours of Old Testament prophecy, in the splendours of New Testament miracles, and in the splendours of Catholic Ritual.

Dangers of Abuse

There are many disposed to admit the fitness and excellence of the use of art and wealth to produce beauty, and even splendour, in the public worship of God - yet they shrink from the danger of abuse. They are afraid that the senses, being charmed with beautiful sights and harmonious sounds, may cause the soul to rest in what is merely external - so they think it safer to avoid these things.

Obviously every good thing may be abused. Abuse does not militate against use. Catholic ceremonial may be abused; but I deny that the danger is so urgent or so frequent as to demand more than ordinary safeguards, or such as to justify the abandonment of Ritual itself. Did God fear that the brilliancy of the Star would beguile the Magi from the hidden glory of the Divine Babe? or that the darkness of Mount Calvary would obscure in the souls of the witnesses the sense of the crime committed? If not, why fear for the effect of Ritual on Christian hearts?

The beauties and glories of Nature have been abused and turned from their true purpose of teaching us of God a thousand times more frequently than the splendour of Ritual. And yet no one condemns that glorious spectacle of Nature as dangerous; no one counsels us to turn our eyes from it, lest it should ensnare our souls. Why, then, should the possibility of abuse make men mistrust a Ritual which teaches much more directly and explicitly of God than the grandeur of the mountains or the fertility of the plains?

I cannot explain the feelings engendered in a good Catholic by some great function of his Church better than in the words of Coleridge, describing the effect upon his soul of one of the great spectacles of Nature.

> "O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
> Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
> Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
> I worshipped the Invisible alone.
> Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody -
> So sweet, we know not we are listening to it -

Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my
thought,
Yea, with my life, and life's own secret joy;
Till the dilating soul - enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing - there,
As in her natural form, swell'd vast to heaven!'"
- *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamont*

I would make another observation regarding this supposed danger of abuse of Ritual. It is scarcely fair in Protestants to judge of Catholics by themselves. Our belief is not theirs. We believe in a Divine Presence in our churches and in sacred ceremonies of which they know nothing. The Protestant Mengel wrote: "Everything depends, in the Protestant form of worship, upon the preacher. For the Catholic, all his churches are alike, and as he conducts his devotions without the priest, it makes but little difference what priest officiates. Hence there prevails, if I may so say, an undisturbed equanimity of devotion everywhere among Catholics."

In Marshall's "Christian Missions" there are some reflections which harmonise with what I have said: "If there be in the world a class of men who, in a certain sense, are absolutely indifferent to ceremonial, although obliged to use it - and who, in celebrating the mysteries of their holy religion, are almost unconscious of its presence, the Catholic belongs to that class. Whether he assists at the Holy Sacrifice, which constitutes the chief act of his religion, or at any other of the divine offices which attract him to the house of prayer, his eye and heart are fixed, not on sensible objects, but on that Awful Presence veiled in the Tabernacle or manifested to the gaze of the faithful. Vestments, music, and incense - whatever meets eye or ear - he hardly notes, for there is something there which speaks to the soul, and taxes all its powers. Let the accompanying ceremonial be meagre or imposing, it is with the mind of a Christian, not of an artist, that he marks its presence. Like Mary and Salome, he is thinking of the body which he has come to adore, not of the 'sweet spices' which he has brought to anoint it. He provides, indeed, out of reverent love, the 'fine linen,' the 'myrrh and aloes,' and whatever else his devotion may inspire or the Church appoint, for in this august action she leaves nothing to human caprice or invention: but all these accessories of his worship - the cloud of

incense, the blazing lights, the swelling choir, and the jewelled - robes - have no worth and no significance but as offerings to Him who gives them all their value by deigning to accept them." (T. W. Marshall, " Christian Missions," Volume 2, Chapter 4).

And are not Protestants liable to mistake the effect of Catholic Ritual on Catholics, because they judge of it by the effect it produces on themselves? It is to them so new, and therefore so strange, that, like all novelties, it produces an exaggerated effect. It distracts them, it makes worship impossible to them - because they do not understand it, cannot follow it, or take any part in it. To them it is not a help, but a perplexity and an obstacle. Is it fair to suppose that Catholics are affected in this way? To them all is familiar, simple, natural; it is what they have been accustomed to from their infancy, and trained both to understand and use.

Another thing to remember is that in the Catholic Church all is regulated by authority. Public attention is not aroused by the eccentricities of individual clergymen. Congregations are not thrown into confusion by rites they have never before witnessed, of which they neither know the origin nor the meaning. The principles and practice of Ritual are part of the ancient tradition of the Church. We believe that Ritual is something supernatural, considered by God worthy of His own direct regulation in the Old Dispensation, and of His no less real though indirect regulation in the Christian Church. Hence the Council of Trent pronounced an anathema against all who should say that the approved rites of the Catholic Church may be despised or omitted at the option of the priests, or may be changed by them.

Symbolic Ritual

Hitherto, we have considered only that feature of Catholic ceremonial which may be called Splendour, Grandeur, or Magnificence. But by far the greater number of the Church's rites have no pretension to this quality. The ordinary administration of the Sacraments, the ordinary prayers and benedictions of the Church have nothing in them of the nature of splendour. There are parishes where Catholics never saw a ceremony to which the epithets grand or imposing could be given.

There is, however, another kind of Ritual very different from what we have been considering. It makes use of the senses indeed, but not to impress them: they merely serve as instruments to convey ideas to the mind. The Church makes use of actions which are purely symbolical, and she gives a mystic signification to a multitude of actions and objects used in her various rites. This, too, is a subject of accusation against her. It is the nursery tale told to children that Catholics are slaves of forms and ceremonies, that they think to go to heaven by taking holy water, making genuflexions, and counting their beads. The Catholic priesthood has been called "a hierarchy of magicians, saving souls by machinery."

Let us reverently consider some of the symbolical actions practised or taught by our Lord and His Apostles in the Gospels. The grand and impressive ceremonial spoken of there we have already considered. Let us see whether our Lord sanctions minute and symbolic rites as well as solemn and imposing ones.

He *knelt* in prayer - He fell flat on the ground - He *raised His eyes* to heaven in giving thanks. He approved of the Publican *striking his breast*, of "sackcloth and ashes" as symbols of contrition. Saint Paul considered it very important that women should pray publicly with covered head (1st Corinthians 11). He did not consider it superstitious "to lift up the hands in prayer" or "to fall down on his face to adore God." These and many other instances show that worship *in spirit* does not exclude worship with the body.

Ceremonial is equally fitted to be a vehicle of *truth*. It expresses,

sometimes more forcibly. than words, the nature of what is done; and this is the justification of the rites used by the Church in the administration of the Sacraments.

I remember but one instance of our Lord working a miracle without word or sign - at Cana of Galilee. Either He uses a formula of words, as "I will - be thou made clean," or more often He gives emphasis to His words by action. When He says to the sea "Peace, be still," He rises at the same time in an attitude of majesty. He stretches out His hand to Peter on the sea, takes the dead maiden by the hand, imposes His hands on the crippled woman. Sometimes he uses far more elaborate ceremonial. He takes the deaf and dumb man aside, puts His fingers in his ears, spits, and touches his tongue, looks up to heaven, groans, and pronounces the word Ephphetha ("Be opened") (Mark 7). Again Saint Mark tells us how He spat upon the eyes of a blind man, laid His hands on him, and made him gradually to see (Mark 8:23). And Saint John relates that, in another case, He spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle, and spread the clay on the blind man's eyes, and bade him go and wash in a certain pool (John 9:6,7).

His manner of imparting spiritual graces and teaching lessons of virtue is no less symbolical than His method of working bodily miracles. He imposes His hands on the little children with prayer; He breathes on His disciples when giving them the Holy Ghost; and lifts up His hands to bless them when He ascends into heaven. At one time He writes on the ground when the Pharisees wish to stone the adulteress; at another He curses and withers up the fruitless fig tree. Then he performed the remarkable ceremonial of washing His disciples' feet. He prescribed various ceremonies to be performed by the Apostles - anointing the sick with oil, baptising with water, and celebrating the Holy Eucharist. They also make use of the imposition of hands to convey grace or authority; they use relics to work miracles; they convey truths by symbolic actions, as when Agabus binds his own hands and feet to signify the captivity of Saint Paul.

But one may say "The Jewish Religion was a religion of symbols - the Christian Religion has emerged from these." Whatever was intended in Jewish Worship to be local and limited of course has

been abolished: whatever was imposed as a bondage has been removed. But that the principle of symbolism was peculiarly and exclusively Jewish is neither declared in Scripture nor in conformity with common sense. Symbolism may either express the thoughts and feelings of the soul - and in this case it cannot be peculiar to Jews; or it may refer to some divine reality external to the worshipper - and in this case it may belong either to the past, the present, or the future. So I am at a loss to understand why the Christian religion should not use the language of symbols as well as that of words. It would be equally reasonable to say that language can have no place in Religion now, because it was used among the Jews. "But some of the symbols used by the Church were taken both from Mosaic and Pagan worship." Why not? They were the natural symbols of sentiments that were good, and of doctrines that were true. We might as well reject the immortality of the soul because heathens taught it, as reject symbols because heathens used them.

I might, here, mention an assertion sometimes made - "Catholic worship is theatrical." If by this is merely meant that it has a scenic or representative character, no fault can be found with the assertion. But if it implies that the Church uses a display intended to attract and captivate the idle and curious gaze, the word is singularly inappropriate. The truth is that the idle and curious* gazers are always offended by Catholic ceremonies - they cannot understand them, and they have little charm for the mere eyes and ears. So many ceremonies have a spiritual and hidden meaning, so many Prayers contain deep and mystic allusions, which can only be understood by those who are instructed and attentive. The ceremonies of Holy Week, for instance, possess little attraction to the curious Protestant or the worldly Catholic - but they are full of inexhaustible charm to the devout worshipper who has taken pains to ascertain their meaning and_ to meditate attentively on the events they recall and on the allusions they contain. The Church's rites are like our Lord's parables, by the very texture of their veil of obscurity provoking a holy curiosity to look beneath: they are the mirror in which we see now enigmatically what as yet we cannot gaze on face to face.

It is quite true that the stranger to our faith, who comes amongst us to pry, perchance to mock, will go away filled with scorn - for our

ceremonies are a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians, while they are a light by night to the Israelites. But it is in great measure to the emblematic and profound nature of the Church's rites that is due the singular fact that, while to witness them but once is tedious to the incredulous and the worldly, their constant recurrence never wearies the devout. Each year, as the same feasts revolve, those who have eyes to see and ears to hear discover new depths, new beauties, new harmonies, new lights, new joys and consolations.

Is it not right that it should be so? Is there to be no reward for the diligence and attention of the devout? Or are we to be blamed because some ceremonies impress the senses and thus enlighten the ignorant and arouse the careless - and then blamed a second time because there are others which suit only the learned and the spiritually minded? Must not the Church care for all her children? Taught by the same Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures, she has composed her Ritual on the same plan. "In Holy Scripture," says Saint Augustine, "there are many things plain, by which God feeds the soul even of the simple. There are other things obscure. The very obscurity of these provokes curiosity and prevents satiety; there is a pleasant labour in seeking the hidden truth, and when it is discovered it is enjoyed in proportion to the labour of its acquisition. And thus a novelty is given even to what was old, by the newness of the form that envelops it" (Saint Augustine Enar: in Psalm 138).

And on what plan but this was God's own Ritual composed? Look again to Calvary. The darkness, the earthquake, the loud voice, were signs which even the simplest could understand - and they struck their breasts with compunction. But there were other words and signs the people could not read. Why was the veil of the Temple rent? Why were the graves opened? Why was no bone broken? Why did blood and water flow from the pierced side? What was the meaning of the agonising cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" These are questions which the people could not have answered. Perhaps Mary alone, of all the witnesses, knew their full significance. But they are mysteries which invite us to reflection; and he who seeks gains more profit from his search than if all things had been laid bare to him at first.

Effective Ritual

The Catholic Church teaches, not merely that holy impressions may be conveyed to the soul through the senses, and that holy sentiments may be expressed by them - but also, by a positive institution of Jesus Christ, certain rites have been selected as instruments to convey grace to the soul. The former class of ceremonies the Church may institute at will, or the worshipper may adopt them as he likes - but it is evident that the latter cannot be of human institution.

Bossuet, in his famous exposition of the Catholic Faith, writes thus - "The Sacraments of the New Covenant are not merely sacred signs which represent grace, nor seals which confirm it, but instruments of the Holy Ghost serving to apply that grace to our souls. They confer grace upon us in virtue of the words that are pronounced, and of the action that is exteriorly performed - provided we ourselves put no obstacle in the way by our bad disposition.

"We acknowledge seven sacred ceremonies or signs, established by Jesus Christ, as the ordinary means of sanctifying and perfecting the new man. Their divine institution appears in the Holy Scripture, either by the express words of Jesus Christ, or by the grace which is annexed to them - which grace necessarily implies an ordinance of God.

"When God annexes such a grace to outward signs, which of their own nature bear no sort of proportion to so wonderful an effect, He clearly shows us, that besides our own good disposition, there must be a special operation of the Holy Ghost, and a particular application of our Saviour's merits."

Yet a certain writer tells us, after approving of the splendour and the symbolism of Catholic Worship, "If Ritualism is regarded as the expression of sacramental doctrines, if it is connected with priestly pretensions, against which we rebel with all our mind and soul and strength - then we repudiate and abhor the whole system as an imposture and mere mechanical jugglery."

Now, if by "priestly pretensions" this author means the Catholic belief that Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest, has by His death reconciled us with God and God with us, and that He has conferred on certain men a share in His priesthood by giving them certain sacramental powers for the good of their fellowmen - then he "rebels with all his strength" against a most certain and most merciful Providence of God.

What does he make of the following inspired words of Holy Scripture? "Except a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). "Do penance and be baptised for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). "He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (John 20:22,23). "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over - him anointing him with oil" (James 5:14). "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (1st Corinthians 4:1); "has given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2nd Corinthians 5:18). "He (Simon Magus) saw that by the imposition of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given," and Saint Peter replied to his offer of money to receive the same power, "Keep thy money to thyself to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:18,20).

It is a strange thing that people cannot see that God shows His greatness and love more by conferring on His creatures some of His own powers than by exercising them directly. Strange again that anyone can believe in the Incarnation - that the whole life of the Son of God on earth was one great Sacrament, and should still find difficulty in allowing the sacramental principle a place in the Christian religion!

We are made up of body and soul. Three things obviously spring from this constitution of our nature. First, we must worship God with our bodies, with external homage - hence, kneeling, genuflexions, folded hands, singing, and so forth. Secondly, our souls are acted on by external things - so we should expect the Church to use all manner of material elements, both to arouse our

feelings and to convey truth to our minds. And, in the third place, as Nature influences our souls through our bodies - so supernatural influences will come upon us through those same bodies. Thus we have the Sacraments, external signs of inward grace, effecting within us what they outwardly signify.

Here we might quote from Father Martindale's Article on the Sacramental System written in the compilation "God and the Supernatural." He is speaking of the old Puritanical difficulty in the use of externals in Religion.

"They may, in some manner, feel it to be materialistic. They will use the old formula that they want nothing between themselves and their Saviour. . . . But anyhow, not separation is what Sacraments and_ priest occasion. A bridge does not push the river's banks asunder; the ether does not hold the sun away from us; without it, we should not know his rays; nor without air, his heat. But better than bridge or undulating air, are Sacraments. It is, in a Sense, true that for the Christian soul there is no river; or we have crossed it, and stand upon Christ's shore. And not distant is our Light; in our own heart the Morning Star is shining - Save, it is true, we have cleft anew the chasm, and put out the Light. For all that, this life, as we still perforce must live it, is made up of banks and bridges. Between each individual is an unfathomable gulf. Even words must disguise the thought they would fain express; even our thoughts misstate at least in part our truest and most real consciousness. All social life is intertwined by human '" sacraments," in so far as what they hold, they hide; what they bring, they veil. The clasping of the hands - a kiss - we do not chafe at them, or should not. A kiss may be a poor way of expressing, and indeed conveying, love; even, by a kiss we may betray. Yet true lovers do not feel their kiss divides them, comes between them, or caricatures - because it is physical and external - the spiritual, inner love. . . . The Sacraments are the kiss of God, where-through He not only pours out on us the richness of His love, but satisfies the hunger of our sense and thought as well as of our soul. And if it be urged that God, precisely, is the only one who needs no such thing as sense-satisfaction, nor anything external, well, that is amply true. But not such are we. Love is reciprocal: it is not all upon God's side. It must reveal itself to us, who are not only spirit; and it must from us, from our whole self,

receive a full response."

"But if it be further urged that our communion with our God ought, on our side, to be wholly spiritual. . . well, that again cannot be simply so. It is true all nature is inadequate to God. No sense, no thought exhausts Him. But we have resolutely to resist the doctrine that sense and thought are somehow bad, and ought to be eliminated. The chasm between that doctrine and the Catholic, though narrow at first seeming as a hair, is infinite in depth. See Saint John of the Cross! who ever went further than did he, in his doctrine of transcending 'the best in sense, or thought, feeling or will? Yet with horror would he have sprung back from any teaching which suggested that Sacraments should be spurned. Moreover, human nature never ought to do what it cannot. And it cannot dispense with what is after all part of it. . . . At every turn we enact what we most deeply feel. The artist is not base, when he summons colour and sound for the stammering forth of his unutterable dream. The dream and the business, the spirit and the flesh, who are we to forbid their wedlock, or rebuke all nature's God when He desires that with Him all nature should cooperate? Colour and scent and: music; pure elements, like water, oil; bread or wine: men like ourselves, our words and thoughts and actions, He gathers up, and harmonises into His service. The oil, the wine, the man, cannot assuredly violate the Spirit; but the Spirit which uses them, exalts and dignifies these humble things. *O admirabile commercium!* Our world God made, and into it He came; our flesh to Himself He wedded. Pride were in us intolerable, should we insist that through the spirit only we could communicate with Him."

The Law of Compensation

In order to explain still more fully the spirit of Catholic worship, we must now enter into some detail regarding another of the pervading principles which have helped to mould it. This principle or instinct is that of compensation. It is mainly the result of the Incarnation, and therefore pre-eminently characteristic of the religion of Jesus Christ.

When the inspired writer, before the Incarnation, gave a reason for the splendour of God's worship, he found it in the majesty of God. " What shall we be able to do to glorify Him? for the Almighty Himself is above all His works. The Lord is terrible and exceeding great, and His power is admirable. Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can, for He will yet far exceed, and His magnificence is wonderful" (Ecclus. 43:30-32).

But if we be asked now to give a reason for using all possible splendour, and all possible exactitude, in the worship of God, we shall find that reason not merely in the Majesty of God, but in His humiliations - and the worship of Christians is not merely adoration, but it is compensation.

Compensation or reparation is an instinct of the human heart. When a man has gone through labour, or endured suffering, or sacrificed himself in some way for the sake of another, if the latter has any feeling of generosity, he resolves to make some return to his benefactor. Now, it would be strange if this instinct of the human heart found no place in the worship of Jesus Christ.

A writer in favour of "simplicity" in religious worship argues - "Our Lord's whole life on earth was conducted in the very simplest and plainest manner. Should we not try to imitate His walk, if we are anxious to act rightly?" I reply, that to imitate our Divine Master's poverty in what regards ourselves is a sublime evangelical counsel; but to retain our riches for our personal use, and refuse to employ them in His worship, on the plea that for our sakes He became poor, is as sordid a sophism as ever entered the human heart.

The reasoning should stand thus: "My Lord has embraced poverty for me; then I will pour out my riches at His feet: for me He has humbled Himself; then I will exalt Him: for my sake He has exposed Himself to men's neglect; then will I redouble my homage and adoration."

It is the old story of "the children in the market place." The Church may pipe to men, and they will not dance: she may lament, and they will not mourn. (Matthew 11:17) "Let the worship of Jesus Christ be rich and splendid," she says. "No," men answer; "He loved poverty on earth, He must love it still." "Well then," cries the Church again, "if Jesus Christ loves poverty now, imitate Him in your lives." "No," again answers the world: "it is enough that Christ was born in a manger; His children are not always to dwell there. Christ is not to be the poor man of the universe for ever; He is to be the King of Glory."

I will accept these words in a nobler sense. No; "Christ is not to be the poor man of the universe for ever." We will not treat Him as a poor man because for our sakes He became poor.

Now let us return to our study of the Gospel. When Magdalen poured out her precious ointment on our Saviour's head, some were indignant and said, "Why was this waste made?" The word "waste" here seems exactly to express the view of men like the writer whom I have quoted. It implies that the effusion of costly ointment was suitable for an earthly king, who took delight in pomp and splendour, but it was out of place and thrown away when offered to Jesus Christ. Mary's manner of worship was too ceremonious and unspiritual. Yet listen to our Lord's answer: "Let her alone; why do you molest her? She is come beforehand to anoint My body for the burial. Amen I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her" (Mark 14).

The Spirit of God had revealed to the affectionate heart of the Magdalen the great principle of reparation. And Jesus foretells that when the true worshippers shall worship throughout the world in spirit and in truth, this principle shall be fully recognised.

And was it not on the same principle of compensation that the chief

external glories of our Blessed Lord's life surround just those parts of it which in themselves were most humiliating?

At the time that He was teaching the people, healing the sick, raising the dead, He seems generally to have disregarded the external homage of men. But in the humiliation of His childhood, when no words of grace had fallen from His lips to draw after Him admiring crowds, no miracle had manifested His omnipotence - then He called His ministers from Heaven, and their angelic voices resounded on the hills of Bethlehem; then the shepherds knelt around His crib; and the Eastern sages, with greater pomp, fell prostrate at His infant feet and spread their offerings before Him - gold and frankincense and myrrh.

And, when the time of miracles was past, and that of His Passion and ignominy was beginning, the children of Jerusalem were led by God's Spirit to come forth and meet Him, and hail Him, with palm branches and their garments strewn beneath His feet, as King. "Hosanna to the Son of David." But there were then, as now, men who considered all these external marks of homage as improper - "Hearest Thou what these say?" and they bade Him rebuke the people. "I say to you," He answered, "that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out."

I conclude then that if the Supreme Majesty of the Eternal and Invisible God afforded a reason to the Jews for rendering His worship beautiful and splendid, Christians have an additional reason in the ineffable humiliations of the Incarnation for laying at the feet of their God, so great and yet so lowly - so ineffable in His abasements as well as so mysterious in His perfections, all the homage that nature and art can furnish, that lively faith and burning love can devise.

"Why so many genuflexions? why so much pomp and splendour? Is not all this empty and meaningless, or at least excessive?" Yes, we reply; *empty* when faith does not show you the Presence that fills our ceremonies with life; *meaningless* till love supplies its interpretation; *excessive* to those who have not learnt the excessive abasements which it is designed to compensate.

It is the worship in spirit and in truth which Jesus Christ foretold.

But you who criticise and scoff, you do not know the truth, and you have not the spirit which inspires those hundreds of worshippers whose evident devotion so bewilders you. You see nothing but the altar and the priest, the candles and the genuflexions. You see only with the eyes of the body, not with those of the soul - and therefore you laugh and mock, or you wonder and deplore. Look at the worshippers, watch the faith, the piety, the love, apparent in their postures or written on their faces - and it may yet happen to you, as to many before. "There cometh in one that believeth not. . . and he is convinced of all. . . and so, falling down on his face, he will adore God, affirming that God is among you indeed" (1st Corinthians 14:24,25).

To any candid intelligent inquirer, I offer this key to the spirit of Catholic worship. The Lord of Glory, for the sake of men, remains in a state of voluntary humiliation in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. Shall He be a loser by it? "No," we answer, "not if we can help it."

Let the architect task his greatest skill; let the sculptor and the artist come to his aid; let the richest stuffs be brought from the produce of the loom; let the mines give up their gold, their silver, and their jewels; let the rarest flowers display their hues and shed their fragrance round His altar; let the clouds of incense express the homage of men's prayers, while hundreds of candles declare the light of their faith and the gladness of their hearts. Our God is in a state of humiliation for our sake. Then let Him be lifted up on high; let men fall on their knees and bow their faces low to earth; let Him be carried in procession; and let us tell the world that if our God seems to be a prisoner, He is a "Prisoner of love," and that even in His prison-house He is the Sovereign of our hearts. He is silent. Then let us raise our voices; let the sound of melody be heard; let us proclaim in antiphon and hymn this great truth - that the more He has humbled Himself for our sake, the more should we delight to honour Him.

The worship. of the Catholic Church is altogether founded on the love of Jesus Christ. And love must interpret the conduct of love; cold hearts cannot discover its secrets.

The words of our Lord - "This do for a commemoration of Me" - are

the key to the whole of Catholic worship. It is to commemorate Him that the Church's doctors have written, that her poets have sung, that her architects and artists have laboured, that her musicians have composed. All her efforts have ever been to keep alive in the minds and hearts of her children an affectionate remembrance of what their Redeemer taught, did, and suffered for their sakes.

And this will explain the form which the Liturgy has gradually assumed in the course of ages. Although the essential features of the Ritual are anterior to the inspired writings, yet the possession of these writings by the Church has moulded it subsequently in many details. The Church, ever studying and meditating on the Gospels of her Spouse, has culled every flower from them to adorn her Ritual. Every word that our Lord spoke, every action that He performed, the least detail of His actions, have found attentive observation and affectionate remembrance; and they have been interwoven into some prayer of her Liturgy or commemorated in some ceremony of her Ritual.

The worship of the Church was not the creation of a day, it was not a system organised according to some theory of Pope or Council. It was the growth of ages, of many minds and hearts. It is regulated indeed and reduced: to order by authority, yet it is the result of the working of a supernatural instinct: and that instinct was the contemplation, love, and adoration of Jesus Christ. The Church has fixed her eyes incessantly on the mysteries of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of her Spouse. Seeking to recall to the minds of her children each of these events in its turn, she has created the great cycle of fasts and feasts which make up the ecclesiastical year. Distributing to her children the graces which He has entrusted to her she has naturally adopted the words and forms which He used Himself. Anyone who examines the Missal and the Breviary will see how minute and tender has been the Church's memory.

Now I will conclude with the impressions of Catholic Ritual written by the Protestant Lavater: "What do I behold here? What do I hear in this place? This cross, this golden image, is it not made for Thy honour? The censer which waves round the priest, the Gloria sung in choirs, the peaceful light of the perpetual lamp, these lighted tapers, all is done for Thee. Why is the Host elevated, if it be not for

love of Thee, O Jesus Christ, who art dead for love of us? It is in Thy honour alone that these children, early. instructed, make the sign of the cross, and that their tongues sound Thy praise. The riches collected from distant countries, the magnificence of chasubles, ail that has relation to Thee. Why are the walls and the high altar of marble clothed with tapestry on the day of the Blessed Sacrament? For whom do they make a road of flowers? For whom are the banners embroidered? Those bells within a thousand towers, purchased with the gold of whole cities, do they not bear Thy image cast in their very mould, and is it not for Thee that they send forth their solemn tone? Oh! delightful rapture, Jesus Christ, for Thy disciple to trace the marks of Thy finger where the eyes of the world sees it not! O joy ineffable, for souls devoted to Thee to behold in caves and on rocks, in every crucifix upon hills and highways Thy seal and that of Thy love! Who will not rejoice in the honours of which Thou art the object and the soul?" (Lavater, quoted by Digby in "Mores Catholici," book 5, chapter 2).

The Real Presence

Scanty as are the records of man's abode in Paradise, yet from the Book of Genesis we learn that before the fall, while man was in a state of innocence and happiness,-he was honoured by the visits of his Creator and by sensible manifestations of God's presence. The mind of Adam was unclouded by sin and passion; everything reminded him of the power, the wisdom, the goodness of God. He knew that God was everywhere, and at all times present - there was no forgetfulness of the Divine presence. Yet God did not consider that clear knowledge which Adam possessed to be sufficient. The mere knowledge that God is present can never touch the heart of man so powerfully as some sensible sign, some token addressed to sight or hearing, by which God says to His creature, "See, I am here, and I am thinking of thee."

The reason, perhaps, is that however certainly we may be assured that God is near, and thinking of us, yet we see in this no special proof of His love or care for us. God cannot be absent; He cannot cease thinking of us. But what is the nature of His thoughts? Are they thoughts of peace or of affliction? The mere fact of God's omnipresence does not answer the question. But when God calls to man by a voice, or appears to him in a sign, then man exclaims, "God is thinking of me, God is caring for me, God is loving me."

Man did not remain long a friend of God. Sin made him 'His enemy, and destroyed this loving intercourse. So when our first parents, after their fall, heard the usual token of God's visit, their guilty consciences smote them; and, instead of hastening to welcome Him, they were afraid, and tried to hide themselves from the face of God.

Alas, man flying away from God, hiding from Him, telling Him in fear or hatred to keep away from him, to begone to heaven, to leave him alone with his guilty conscience and his sinful pleasures! That is the history of the human race, except so far as the mercy and grace of God have cleared away that guilt, and won back the reluctant heart to purity and love. But if man has ever fled from God, God has ever sought for man.

For many ages, indeed, the apparitions of God were few and rare. Yet still the human race knew that God had not entirely deserted it. There were patriarchs and prophets to whom God appeared, with whom He conversed, and by whom He sent messages of warning, love, and mercy.

There was, however, no permanent, sensible presence of God upon earth. There was no one place of which it could be said that God's glory dwelt there more than in others. But as "the fulness of time" draws nearer, this great gift was bestowed more liberally. God chose for Himself a peculiar people, and His perpetual, visible presence was to be at once their bond of unity, their strength, their consolation, and their glory.

The wondrous apparition on Mount Sinai was the inauguration of this perpetual presence. Moses was commanded to make the ark with its mercy-seat of purest gold, covered by the wings of the two cherubim. "Thence," said the Almighty, "will I give orders, and will speak to thee over the propitiatory and from the midst of the two cherubim" (Exodus 25:22). "After all things were perfected," adds the sacred historian, ""the cloud covered the tabernacle of the testimony, and the glory of the Lord filled it. Neither could Moses go into the tabernacle of the covenant, the cloud covering all things, and the majesty of the Lord shining"' (Exodus 40:32, 33). From that day God was said to sit between the cherubim; and for ages after, the history of the Jews is in great measure the history of the ark. When they remembered the Divine presence, when they were grateful for it, when they put their trust in it, and surrounded it with holiness of life, they were blessed by God and protected against their enemies; and thus they dwelt under His wings in the abundance of peace. But when they forgot God's presence in their midst, or when they put a superstitious trust in it, thinking it would deliver them like a charm in spite of their sinful lives - then they experienced God's anger.

We all know the words of David, speaking of this Presence - "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners"

(Psalm 83). This particular presence impressed on the Jews in a wonderful manner the sense of God's providence over them, and His peculiar love for them.

The ark of the covenant has long since disappeared, and the magnificent Temple in which it was placed was destroyed by the pagan. He who levelled it to the dust declared that he did so urged by an irresistible power, that he was the instrument of the anger of God. Josephus wrote that shortly before the destruction of the Temple, those who ministered at the altar heard mysterious voices from behind the veil, saying, "Let us depart" - as if God was removing from His people His sensible presence for ever.

But, before the Temple was destroyed, a far different presence had come on earth - that of the Godhead in the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Formerly, there had been signs and tokens of God's presence, but they were not God Himself. Now he that saw Jesus Christ saw God Himself. He did not, indeed, see the divine nature, but he saw the human nature which God had made His own. The voice that spoke as never man spoke, whose command the wind and the sea obeyed, was the voice of God. The eyes whose glance converted Saint Peter were the eyes of God; the feet over which Magdalene wept were the feet of God; the heart on which Saint John rested his head at the supper-table was the heart of God.

Yet His Presence, though now more real, was more hidden and mysterious. Hitherto it had been an object of sight rather than of faith. It was seen by saint or sinner, by the man of faith or the infidel. Notso with the Word made flesh. Many who saw Him believed that they gazed on a mere man - some despised Him and called Him an impostor - they even crucified Him in their incredulity. "There hath stood One in the midst of you whom you knew not." God had come down on earth, and had stood among His creatures, and He had been lost in the crowd, jostled and pushed hither and thither - so hidden was His presence.

And oh how much more gentle and loving was God's manifestation now! No longer the lightning flashing through thick clouds of smoke, as on Mount Sinai; no longer the thunder peal rolling around its summit - filling the Jews with fear; but rather the

overshadowing of the Maiden Mother by the Spirit of God, the loving glances between Mary and her Child, the plaintive cries of the Divine Babe, the angels' songs on the hills of Bethlehem telling men "Fear not, we bring you tidings of great joy."

Emmanuel, the "God with us," had come - but "there was no room for Him in the inn," nor in the hearts of men. "He had not where to lay His head" - He, the world's Outcast. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." But when they were preparing to do Him to death, He was preparing the divine memorial of His death to last till the second advent - and He promised "I am with you all days to the consummation of the world.'" We have seen that a special sensible Presence of God on earth is a great mercy of God, exactly suited to our nature and its needs. We have seen that the frequency and permanence of this Presence vouchsafed to sinless man in Paradise was interrupted by the irruption of sin - that it was gradually restored in the course of ages, becoming more and more perfect as our Redemption drew nearer. We have brought down this history to the Incarnation, when this Presence took a more real yet more mysterious form. Is this history now complete? Has it come to an end? Is there to be any longer any special and sensible presence of God on earth?

Protestants answer "All this came to an end with the Incarnation - the Ascension of Christ into Heaven saw the last sensible token of God's presence among men - henceforth the world is more spiritual, and needs no sensible signs."

How different is the Catholic Faith! We believe that the fulness of time brought with it the fulness of God's sensible presence. All before the Incarnation was but a figure and a prelude of what followed, of what now is and will be to the end. Before Jesus Christ took away from the eyes of men the sight of His sacred Humanity, He took means to perpetuate to the end of time His presence in sensible fashion. In the Holy Eucharist He still dwells in our midst - there especially is He the Emmanuel, the God with us. His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament is as real as when He lay in the manger, walked in Jerusalem, or hung on the Cross - His Presence is permanent, and will never cease till the end of time. Above all, it is not confined to one place, but it girdles the whole earth. This is our

faith, and this is the agelong faith of God's Church, and this is why we rejoice and praise - because He that is great is in the midst of us, the Holy One of Israel.

Two objections, contradicting each other, are continually cast against the Catholic belief in the Real Presence, and are often uttered by the same lips. It is said that it is unspiritual, and that it is too spiritual.

There are some who pretend that those sensible tokens of God's presence which were granted to men in old times were condescensions to their weakness, to their carnal and unspiritual state, and that therefore they are not granted to Christians who are to live by faith.

The answer to this objection is easy. The visible presence of God was not granted to man because he was carnal and sensual. It was granted to him in Paradise, when his soul was pure, his mind undimmed by sin, his sensual nature in entire subjection to his soul. It was granted to him because it fitted his double nature of soul and body. When man fell into sin, he almost forfeited the great gift of God's sensible presence. It was but gradually restored to him. As the fulness of time, the time of redemption, drew nearer, it became more perfect and more permanent, and was consummated only in the person of Him who came to redeem us from sensuality and make us spiritual. To assert that the absence of any sensible token of God's presence is a more spiritual and perfect state is to attack and overthrow the whole doctrine of the Incarnation.

Another objection is that this Presence is too spiritual, that there is not enough for the senses. The Jews of old had signs given them which clearly showed the presence of God. We look at the Eucharist, and we see nothing to denote His presence; we have no proof whatever that God is in our midst.

To this I answer that "the just man lives by faith." In the Eucharist we have something for the senses, something which tells us that God is present in a certain place, in a special manner - not from necessity, but from love, and for our sake. Yet, at the same time, the Object that meets our senses and touches our hearts has no meaning or power except over those who live by faith. It is called the

Mystery of Faith.

It happens with regard to the Blessed Sacrament, as it happened to our Divine Lord in His mortal life on earth. He stood in the midst of men, and they did not know that He was near them. So too men are often in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and they do not know that God is near them, in the greatest prodigy of His power and love. Again, Jesus was pointed out to men; yet many, even when told He was the Son of God, disbelieved it, and they despised Him, and put Him to death. So too it is preached that Jesus is in the Blessed Sacrament, and many disbelieve and scoff; and some have gone so far as to outrage the Blessed Sacrament and trample It under their feet. And yet, though they laugh us to scorn for saying so, they will one day find that they were outraging the Lord of Glory and the God of Love as truly as the Jews crucified Him.

There are many outside the Church who are beginning to open their eyes to the inconsistency of their disbelief. But they divide themselves into two parties, and come to exactly opposite conclusions.

Some cling fast to what they have read in Holy Scripture, which they believe to be inspired. And they ask "If the Jews were blessed with the special loving presence of God in their tabernacles, can Christians be deprived of this privilege?" They look around, and they see that Protestant churches, however rich, are empty - they do not profess to have a sanctuary or a visible presence of God. They look, then, at Catholic churches, and they see that over the tabernacle, where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, hangs a lamp burning day and night and telling of the faith of the Holy Catholic Church - a faith that has never varied for nearly nineteen hundred years, a faith shared by all nations, by well over four hundred million Christians - a faith proclaiming the presence of the King of Kings, more real, more substantial, more permanent than any given to the Jews. And many Protestants are becoming aware that the Catholic doctrine is in closest harmony with the Holy Scriptures they revere, while their own doctrine contradicts those Scriptures - and they are exclaiming, like Jacob, "Truly God is in this place, and I knew it not! How terrible is this place! It is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

But there is another school of Protestants who seek to be consistent by a contrary process. They start, not from their belief in the Holy Scriptures, but from their disbelief in Catholic doctrine. They make up their minds that miracles are now out of question, that apparitions must be set down as delusions, that God now lets the world go its way and never visibly interferes to set it right. Having embraced these as incontrovertible principles, they read their Bible. There they see that in the old days God worked countless miracles, appeared continually to men, was ever interfering with the course of the world. But they feel that so utter a change in God's Providence towards the world is incredible - so they come to doubt the whole story, and they conclude that the Old Testament writers spoke only according to the conceptions of their own times when they represented the Invisible as controlling visibly the course of events.

And such views, from their rationalistic starting-point, are logical enough. If there are no miracles in the Christian Church, it is consistent to say that there were none in the Jewish. If there is no infallible voice to set men right now, there never was a divinely-commissioned messenger on earth. If Jesus Christ is not present in the tabernacle of the Catholic churches, there never was a sensible Presence in the tabernacle of the Jews.

But the Protestant, who admits the wonders of the Old Testament, and denies the wonders of the Catholic Church, is surely inconsistent. With him, there is no harmony in the workings of God's Providence. With us Catholics, there is one grand harmonious development right through the ages of the world's history.

The notion of most Protestants seems to be that just as in the early days of the world there were mastodons and ichthyosauris which have now passed away and given place to a more diminutive race, so, in the ancient times, God's dealings were more marvellous, the proofs of God's Providence more clear, and the tokens of His love more frequent, than in these latter days.

But this is certainly not the teaching of Scripture. The prophets looked forwards, not backwards, for the great manifestation of God's power and love. The crust of the earth may have cooled in the lapse of ages, and the giant productions of primitive times been

replaced by a more puny animal and vegetable kingdom, but God's love has not grown cool, nor has the grandeur of the religion of patriarchs and prophets shrunk into the petty sectarianism of an unsupernatural Christianity.

Though God changes not, His scheme of revelation was one of continuous progress. Jesus Christ came that men might have life more abundantly; and the kingdom of God which He established was to comprise, develope, and bring to perfection whatever was good in the preceding dispensations. Among these good things, one of the most excellent, most beneficial, most loving of God's inventions was that of a special sensible Presence among men. And - oh! that Protestants could know it! - the very triumph of God's love, the most fertile source of every virtue, the strength, the hope, the beauty, the glory of the Christian Church is that Real Presence so flippantly bandied about by controversialists, so fearfully blasphemed in the last four centuries.

The Holy Eucharist is the noblest of the sacraments, and the end to which the others lead. It is the life of the whole ecclesiastical year. It is the victim in the daily sacrifice of the Christian law - it is the food of the Christian soul. It is the fountain of the Church's poetry. It is the source of love and adoration which built those mighty cathedrals at which the modern world wonders. And _ yet this external memorial, which is the central point of everything external, is itself pre-eminently the Mystery of Faith. Faith, then, is the keystone of the whole arch of Catholic Ritual.

I have made no attempt to prove from the words of the New Testament the Real Presence of Christ on our altars. There are many books of such proofs. Moreover the prejudices against Catholic doctrine are for the most part quite independent of the words of Scripture. Men who are their victims are almost sure, antecedently, to explain away the words of our Lord's Institution; for they cannot or will not admit the consequences contained in them. "The text - This is My body," says Macaulay, "was in Sir Thomas More's New Testament as it is in ours. The absurdity of the literal interpretation was as great and as obvious in the sixteenth century as it is now. No progress that science has made, or will make, can add to what seems to us the overwhelming force of the argument against the

real presence. A faith that stands that test will stand any test."

No possible form of words in which the doctrine could have been stated by our Lord would convince such people. The accumulated learning and elaborate arguments of Wiseman's Lectures on the Eucharist would make no impression on them. The Real Presence involves a priesthood, the priesthood a hierarchy, the hierarchy a perpetual visible indefectible Church. To this they will not submit at any price. The Real Presence brings us face to face with a living personal God, who is no vague abstraction. But with men who recognise no God but the Unknown and Unknowable of so-called Science, there is little use in arguing either for the Church or for the Bible.

There are many others, however, who are not so blinded by prejudice. At least they revere the Bible, though they know not God's Church. What has been said may help such to see the unity of God's Providence in Church and Bible - may help them to reflect that the prejudices against such mysteries as the Real Presence and others are gradually undermining the Scriptures and threaten to sweep them utterly away. If they believe in the ancient prodigies, let them at least examine the evidence for the modern claims.

Ritual and Tradition

We have been considering what support the New Testament gives to some of the principal characteristics of Catholic worship. We come now to see how far the Rites themselves, as well as the principles on which they are based, are of Christian origin; and how Ritual is founded on Aradigos is itself no small part of Tradition.

Catholic Ritual is largely founded on events recorded in the New Testament, though it is, in its essential parts, more ancient than the New Testament. Moreover, we cannot expect to find a full and detailed account of all that is of apostolic or divine origin in the Sacred Writings. "There are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25). But all these things have not been lost to us.

First, let us have some clear notions of what the Church means by Tradition. "Unwritten Tradition" is a technical phrase. It does not mean Tradition never consigned to books, committed only to memory and handed down by word of mouth alone. It rather means Tradition not written down in the canonical inspired books of Scripture - but intrusted by the Holy Ghost to the Church to be transmitted in other ways, of which writing is, of course, one of the principal. The distinction is, in many respects, precisely the same as that between the unwritten or common law, and the written or statute law, in British jurisprudence. Is not the common law to be found in books? - yet it is not incorporated in Acts of Parliament.

It is by no means necessary to read all the law manuals of early and later date to know some point of law - we find it in the practice of the law-courts. So it is not necessary (nor possible) to read all the works of all the Christian witnesses to Tradition to know some point of Christian doctrine. The Apostolic Traditions have been handed down in a living and continuous Society, from the day of their origin until now. And a member of that living Society, the Catholic Church, enters into possession of its Traditions by means of intercourse with that Society.

Nor can these Divine Traditions be lost, or mixed with error - as human traditions so frequently are - because God has promised that His holy Spirit of Truth will always be with His Church to guide it in all truth. To assert that the Christian Church was plunged in error for eight hundred years, and needed Luther and Henry and Elizabeth and their strange brood to purify it - is not only ludicrous, but it gives the lie to the promise of Jesus Christ Himself.

Now, Ritual forms a part of Tradition. It is one of the means by which - under the guidance of the Holy Spirit - the Truth has been handed down to us. Take an illustration from the Sacrament of Baptism. Its form of words teaches of the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and ~ Holy Ghost. The pouring of the water teaches of the stain of sin, original or actual - and, indirectly, of our first father from whom original sin is derived, and consequently of the unity of the human race. It teaches also of the second Adam, the Redeemer, by whose authority this rite is administered, of grace and justification, of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, through which the death to sin and resurrection to grace are conferred. It bears witness, too, of a visible Church, to which it is a visible entrance. Of all these things, it speaks of its very nature. And of how much more does it tell us when the rites and ceremonies connected with it are added, the exorcisms and unctions, the profession of faith and the promises, the white robe and the lighted candle, and the rest!

Cardinal Manning ("Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost") wrote: "The sacrament of Baptism incorporates, so to say, the doctrines of original sin and of regeneration; the sacrament of Penance, the absolution of sin after Baptism, the cleansing of the Precious Blood, the power of contrition, the law of expiation; the sacrament of Confirmation, the interior grace, and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; the sacrament of Order, the divine authority, unity, and power of the hierarchy of the Church; the sacrament of Matrimony, the unity and indissolubility of Christian marriage, the root of the Christian world; and so on. Each one embodies, teaches, and requires faith in a constellation of Christian truths; and the seven sacraments of the Church are a record, or Scripture of God, anterior to the written Gospels of the Evangelists. Much more the divine worship of the universal Church, of which one of these seven

sacraments is the centre, namely, the sacrifice and sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The Incarnation, Redemption, and union of the Mystical Body with its Head, the Communion of Saints and of souls departed, are therein incorporated and manifested. All truths congregate around the altar, as all truths radiate from Jesus Christ. The whole revelation of Christianity is reflected in it."

The Christian Religion is not just a divine philosophy that was first delivered orally and then committed to writing - whose acceptance and influence might be interrupted for a time; and then, having been consigned to a book, might after such interruption find fresh readers, and a new and even greater realisation. This seems to be the Protestant view. In_ the Catholic theory, such an interruption in the tradition of Christianity would be its destruction. A doctrine, like that of almsgiving, for instance, may, be conceived to lie dormant in a book for ages, and then strike root in the congenial soil of a better generation of readers, and bear fruit a hundredfold. But a supernatural Ritual does not admit of interruption. Any breach of continuity would be its destruction. Like the heaven-descended fire on the Jewish altar, it must never be allowed to die out, or it cannot be rekindled, except by a miracle.

In a word, Ritual, as Catholics understand it, is not merely a system of ceremonies or observances, of human institution - but it contains, besides these, sacraments of divine origin, some of them requiring a supernatural priesthood and an uninterrupted Apostolic succession. And each of them presupposes and expresses a cluster of divinely revealed doctrines. Such a Ritual involves Tradition - it is Tradition.

Scripture Witnesses to Tradition

What does the New Testament tell us of the Tradition of Ritual? Does it condemn Tradition, or does it grant it a perpetual office essential to the transmission of Christianity?

Our Lord severely denounced the Pharisees, because "they made void the commandment of God that they might keep their own tradition,'" and He applied to them the words of the prophet - "In vain do they worship Me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men." These words are flung by ignorant opponents, who "blaspheme the things they know not," against the sacred traditions of the Christian Church.

The answer need not delay us long; it is so obvious. Our Blessed Lord does not*condemn the Pharisees for following tradition, but for following *their* traditions, human traditions, false traditions, traditions contrary to the real and authentic tradition of the Jews. The Jewish Religion was at no time a mere book revelation. Antecedent to and concurrent with the writings from time to time given them by Moses and the prophets was the great national tradition - their polity and worship. In our Lord's time, sects and heresies had been formed - taking from or adding to the ancient and authentic tradition. What Jesus Christ blames in the Pharisees is that they magnify their sectarian traditions and thus undermine the true tradition.

What is there in this that bears the slightest resemblance to the conduct of the Catholic? Because the Pharisees prayed at street-corners, is all prayer condemned? Because the Pharisees disfigured their faces when they fasted, is all fasting hypocritical? Because the Pharisees sounded a trumpet when they gave alms, are we never to relieve the poor? And so, because the Pharisees followed false human traditions - are we not to 'follow' divine traditions?

But are not the traditions which Protestants follow precisely similar to the Pharisaical traditions - those of man, and not of God? That they do follow some kind of tradition is clear. "The truth is," wrote Mr Gladstone, in his remarks on Ecce Homo, "that we are all of us

traditioners in a degree much greater than we think. What we suppose to be from Scripture is really, as a general rule, from the Catechism, or the schoolmaster, or the preacher, or the school of thought, in immediate contact with which we have been brought up." A Protestant may repudiate tradition; may try to exercise his private judgement on Scripture, unfettered by the school or sect with which he has been associated - yet he will not escape the influence of tradition. He cannot put from his mind his past thoughts and character - and these have been largely formed by the tradition in the midst of which he has lived. "Our real commentators are our strongest traits of character; and we usually come out of the Bible with all those texts sticking to us which our idiosyncrasies attract" (H. W. Beecher).

Among the Jews, the Rabbinical traditions were of a later origin than either Scripture or the real Mosaic and prophetic traditions; so, too, among Protestants the traditions of their elders are not yet four hundred years old. Moreover, they are clearly against the obvious and early Christian interpretation of the Scriptures. We read: "Preach the Gospel to every creature. . . . I am with you all days to the consummation of the world. . . . He that heareth you, heareth Me. . . . The gates of hell shall not prevail against My Church" - but the Protestant tradition tells us - "The gates of hell did prevail for eight hundred years and more; Jesus Christ is not with the Church but with the Bible; he that reads the Bible may dispense with living teachers."

Again, "This is My Body; this is My Blood"; "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them"; "We are the dispensers of the mysteries of God" - yet, the Protestant tradition tells the world" Holy meanest is not the real Body and Blood of Christ"; "Men cannot forgive sins"; "There must be no priesthood between the soul and God." Such traditions are truly the false traditions of men, so severely condemned by our Divine Lord!

But Tradition, so necessary at first, became even more necessary afterwards for the preservation of the Christian faith. We are told by some that about the beginning of the fourth century the canon of the New Testament was at length completed and generally accepted, and that thereupon the old rule of faith, oral tradition,

became antiquated. It had been a transitory form of communicating the truth, which was needed-no longer - now that the canon of Scripture had been promulgated. This latter became the sole rule of faith.

But history tells us that, almost immediately after the period appointed by this supposed providence of God. for the substitution of the Book for the Church, the civilisation of Greece and Rome, in which the use of books was comparatively easy and general, was swept away by the incursions of barbarian hordes. It gave place to that state of ignorance and anarchy in which the individual possession and study of the Bible was a sheer impossibility to the immense majority of Christians. Thus, the age that could read had no Bible to read, and the age that possessed the Bible was not able to read it! A mysterious providence of God indeed!

If, on the other ee affirm that God never substituted, in any age, a written rule of faith for an oral one; that God appointed Tradition, divine, universal, unchangeable Tradition, as the living rule of faith for all men and for all time - if we say this, and prove it from Old and New Testament, from history, and from the very nature of things, we are called Pharisees! Another point we might mention in passing is the patent fact that "the Bible and the Bible only" is a most prolific source of dissension, while the Catholic method of Tradition has produced marvellous unity.

In the first years of the Reformation, Calvin wrote to Melanchthon: "It is of great importance that no suspicion should reach posterity of the divisions amongst us; for it is beyond imagination ridiculous, that after having broken off from the rest of the world, we should agree so little amongst ourselves even in the very outset of our Reformation" (See Bossuet's " Histoire des Variations," liv. 2). Here was the first blush of shame at the beginning of a bad career! But the theological conscience has now grown hardened, and has learnt to glory in its shame. Now, we hear boasts of "the comprehensiveness" of the Anglican Church. That same comprehensiveness is fast destroying all supernatural Religion in the country!

Yet our Blessed Lord prayed - "For them also who through their (the Apostles) word shall believe in Me: that they may all be one, as

Thou Father in Me, ang I in Thee; that they may also be one in Us - that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17:21). And Saint Paul speaks of the necessity of "One mind and one judgment - all speaking the same thing" (1st Corinthians 1). This unity, the experience of nearly nineteen hundred years proves, can only be obtained by the traditional and authoritative teaching of the Church, and not by the principle of the independent investigation of the Bible.

Again, the Bible itself says not one word to indicate that the Christian faith and life are ever to be derived from it independently of Tradition. Though Jesus Christ intended to confer upon His Church the inestimable treasure of the Gospels, Epistles, etc., no such intention is expressed among His recorded sayings. What they do state is that He chose Tradition as the means of making known His precepts to the world, and, moreover, that in speaking of Tradition He laid special stress on Ritual. "Teach all nations, baptising them." "Taking bread, He gave thanks and brake, and gave to them, saying, This is My Body which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me."

The Apostles, indeed, wrote their Epistles, and intended them to be used in the various churches; but there is no hint that they contemplated a time when Scripture should supplant Tradition. Saint Paul tells the Thessalonians to "stand fast, and hold the traditions which they have received, whether by word or by epistle" (2nd Thessalonians 2:14). And, when he was nearing his end, and he would make provision for the future after his death, he wrote to Saint Timothy: "Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith, and in the love which is in Christ Jesus. Keep the good thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost. . . and the things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also. . . . Evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, erring and driving into error; but continue thou in those things which thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee, knowing of whom thou hast learned them'" (2nd Timothy).

What means does Saint Paul provide for the safe custody of the Religion he has planted with so much labour? What precautions

does he take against the dangers that threaten it? Does he say that tradition is an unsafe guardian, that it has nearly done its work, that it must soon yield to Scripture? Does he tell Timothy to multiply copies of the epistles he has received, and spread them among the people? Does he speak of the printing press or of Bible Societies? No. He speaks of the fulfilment of a sacred trust; and that trust is to preach the doctrine received, and to hand it on as a sacred trust to other men.

The truth is that Saint Paul relied neither on book nor traditions, considered as mere human means of preserving truth. He knew his Master's promise that the Holy Spirit of Truth should guide the Church in all truth. His trust was in the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost makes use of many external means, of which inspired Scripture is one, and all the rest are called Tradition.

When Jesus Christ stood before Pontius Pilate, and was asked about His Kingship, He replied, "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth" (John 18:37). The kingdom, then, of Jesus Christ is one of which truth is the constitution, truth the wealth, and the diffusion of truth the very purpose of its existence. This kingdom of truth is "the Church of the living God," "the pillar and ground of truth." Truth can no more fail from the Church than Jesus Christ can have been born in vain. The preservation of this truth, whole and undefiled, is the perpetual work of the Holy Ghost. In this work the Apostles and their successors are His cooperators. In fulfilling their trust they are not left to their own discretion. What they had received orally and personally before many witnesses from the Apostles, the successors of these Apostles committed orally and personally to "faithful men." Together with copies of Apostolic writings they handed down Apostolic doctrine, Apostolic discipline, Apostolic ritual, Apostolic succession.

Those "faithful men" were commanded to do the same to another generation of faithful men after them. When was this to cease? Was it ever to cease? No hint of such a thing is given us. It was a trust for which they were to render an account to God. Would they have been faithful men, had they considered that their trust had lapsed, without an express declaration of the will of God? They would have

sinned against the Holy Ghost who had committed to them the deposit, and "set them to rule the Church."

Thus all along the ages, and especially in the first four centuries, disputes were at once settled by the words *traditum est, traditur ab Apostolis* - "it is the Tradition."

Tradition Witnesses to Scripture

Tradition is not merely a witness to revelation independent of Scripture; it is the principal witness to Scripture itself. Indeed, it is to Tradition that we owe the Bible in its present form.

Let us have recourse to an illustration: An engineer, wishing to arrange his affairs, opens a chest containing a multitude of letters and other documents. Many of these are papers of his father's; and these he wishes to gather into a separate packet. They are not, however, originals, but copies. Neither the handwriting nor the signature of his father is there to guide him. Mixed up with his father's papers are many other documents treating of the same or of kindred subjects. How is he to sort out the genuine letters of his father? He and he alone can do it. He reads them carefully. He knows his father's style and tone of thought. He remembers the family history of some of the papers. He detects phrases or allusions which could have come from his father alone, and which the son alone would have noticed. In some of these papers there are references to certain machinery which his father was constructing; but this very machinery is now in his son's possession, and by comparing it with the papers - the completed work with the rough sketch or the partial detail - he can assure himself that those papers are his father's.

It is evident that no one but the son, or one in a similar position, could make this selection. It is evident also that when it is made no one else could properly edit those letters, i.e., interpret them aright, illustrate them, supplement them. And this because he is not merely the possessor of his father's letters, but he was the confidant of his labours, and is the inheritor of his construction.

Now such are the relations of the Church and Bible. The sacred books of which it is composed came into the hands of the Catholic Church, together with many other treatises on the same subjects. When the time came for making a separation, the Catholic Church alone could have made it. In her traditions she possessed the Apostolic doctrine; she was formed by the Apostolic discipline; she worshipped according to the Apostolic example. She had in her

possession, in daily use, the Sacrifice and Sacraments given her by the Apostles. Though some Apostolic writings had perished, and of the others only copies were in existence, yet she had her family history of these documents, and, consequently, she and she alone could have compiled the Canon of the New Testament.

And for the same reason she only can edit it, i.e., explain it correctly, interpret its allusions, supply its omissions, and explain its purpose. And all this she can do, because, besides the Bible, she possesses in her Tradition, and particularly in her Ritual, a divine legacy anterior to the Bible - its key, and its supplement.

The Church had received from the Apostles the Christian revelation before the New Testament was written - so that the Apostles, before they left the earth, could say to all their disciples, as Saint Paul to the clergy of Ephesus, "I take you to witness this day that I am clear from the blood of all men, for I have not spared to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26,27). This was said before some of the Gospels and most of the Epistles were written.

The "whole counsel of God" was known, therefore, before the New Testament came into being; and the most ardent advocates of Bible Societies must admit that several generations of Christians lived and died practising the most heroic virtue without the Bible, by means of Tradition. So that Saint Irenaeus, writing in the middle of the second century, says: "What if the Apostles had not left us writings? Would it not have been needful to follow the order of that tradition which they delivered to those to whom they committed the Churches? - to which many of the barbarous nations who believe in Christ even now assent, having salvation written, without paper and ink, by the Spirit in their hearts, sedulously guarding the old traditions."

Here, we might remind our readers of Saint Luke's words - "Many had taken in hand to set forth in order a narration of the things that have been accomplished among us, according as they have delivered them to us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses" (Luke 1:1,2). There were many Gospel histories in circulation; doubtless there were treatises also on Christian doctrine and discipline. Many of these were read, with the writings of the Apostles, in the assemblies of the faithful. By degrees, the Spirit of

God, who guided the Church, sorted those which bore authority out from the rest.

And if these Christian documents were mingled at first with the inspired writings - so many records of the sayings and-doings of Christ, and some Epistles of Saint Paul have perished. Saint John said the whole world would not contain the books necessary, if all our Lord's acts were recorded. Have all these precious deeds been lost to us? Our Lord spoke to His Apostles, after His Resurrection, of "the kingdom of heaven" - i.e., of His kingdom of truth, the Church. Have all these things been withheld from us? Have we no knowledge of Saint Paul's teaching, in his lost Epistles?

Those who maintain, like the Anglican Church in its homilies, that God left the Christian world "in damnable idolatry for eight hundred years and more" can consistently answer in the affirmative - "God allowed all these to perish and be completely forgotten." Nay, they must so answer, if they hold by "the Bible and the Bible only." We Catholics know that Tradition has preserved "the whole counsel of God." Our Lord promised that His Holy Spirit would bring to the mind of His Church all He had taught.

Thus, we have seen that as Scripture bears witness to Tradition, so by Tradition alone do we know what is the inspired Scripture; and by Tradition alone we possess those other Truths, taught by Christ and His Apostles, which are not found in the "written word of God."

Ritual, The Key to the New Testament

We may seem to have diverged somewhat from the subject of Ritual. But it was necessary to show the need and the position of Tradition in general, before we came to the question of a particular means of Tradition, viz., Ritual. We have seen how Tradition not only taught the . Church what constitutes the Bible (the collection of books), but also gives her the power to edit it, to interpret allusions, to throw light on obscurities, to reconcile apparent discrepancies, and to supply deficiencies. In other words, Tradition is the divinely appointed key to Holy Scripture. In the present chapter, we shall illustrate this in the matter of Ritual.

It has been warmly maintained that the New Testament needs no other key than such as we should employ in interpreting Plato or Thucydides - critical knowledge of the language, and a certain familiarity with the political, philosophical, or social circumstances in which the authors wrote. "Surely," one affirms, "it will be allowed that if God has deemed it desirable to reveal His will to mankind by means of intelligible books, He must have intended that the contents of those books should be discovered in accordance with those general laws which are conducive to the right understanding of documents in general. If this were not the case, He would have chosen insufficient and even contradictory means inadequate to the purpose He had in view."

Since, however, the New Testament nowhere asserts that it was written in order "to reveal God's will to mankind," as the words are understood by Protestants, we cannot argue from the will of God to the intelligibility of Scripture; but rather must conclude from the nature of Scripture to the will of God.

Certainly the Bible must be intelligible, when used as it was intended to be used. This is a self-evident axiom for all who believe the Bible came from God. It may be obscure, and its obscurities will have a divine purpose; but generally unintelligible it cannot be. The question, then, is one of fact. Is the New Testament, in all its main features at least, an intelligible document when submitted to historico-grammatical processes, and to those alone? We shall see

that it is not - that it is only intelligble when interpreted by Christian tradition, and that this tradition was meant to be its interpreter.

Let us consider plain historical facts. Will the opponents of Tradition undertake to prove that candid and intelligent men do attain to such an accurate and universally admitted interpretation of the facts and doctrines of the New Testament as they do, for example, of the life and opinions of Cicero? Is it not, on the contrary, an undeniable fact that learned men, candid men, men eager for the truth, men who spend their whole lives in the study of the New Testament, come to utterly different conclusions as to the most fundamental doctrines and practices of the Christian Religion? The divergences and contradictions are too notorious to be either denied or palliated.

What pretext, then, is there for supposing that the New Testament is to be interpreted just like all other documents? Is there any similar diversity with regard to: other documents? If it were no more difficult to ascertain the meaning of the Gospels than it is to interpret the Roman historians; if the sense of Saint Paul's Epistles could be found by the same means by which we read and understand the epistles of Cicero, then no history ought to be more generally admitted than that of Christianity, no fact of antiquity ought to be so universally agreed upon as the opinions and acts of Saint Paul. Certainly more patient labour has been spent on the study of the Bible than on that of all other ancient documents put together.

But is there any such unanimity? Are we gradually approaching it? Does not almost each year bring out some new attempt to reconstruct Christianity out of Scripture? Three hundred years and more of Protestantism have been devoted to the study of the Bible without Tradition. There has been no lack of learning or of earnestness, but there is more diversity than ever. Obviously then, the experiment has failed, and the truth is unattainable by this means.

Let us take an illustration of this in the matter of Ritual. The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of unity. That there is such a Sacrament or Rite is admitted on all hands. Now let us try to learn the meaning

and practice of this Rite by independent investigation of the Bible. Some interpreters tell us that Christ meant that His real Body and Blood are present, and nothing else; others that His real-Body and Blood are present, and also bread and wine; still others that He is only received spiritually; and yet, a fourth opinion, the bread and wine are only a representation of His Body and Blood.

So we are reduced to this dilemma. Jesus Christ came to deliver us from error and teach us truth. But either He could not make His Apostles understand in what sense He gave His Body and Blood, or the Apostles could not transmit their knowledge to their disciples. Thus, after nearly nineteen hundred years of Christianity, the meaning of one of its central institutions is still to be discovered! Our Divine Master, on the eve of His Death, while He was apparently providing a Sacrament of union and of love, was in reality casting among His disciples an apple of discord, an insoluble enigma, over which they might hopelessly quarrel till time should be no more!

If this is the necessary result of the Protestant method of interpreting the Bible, then that method must be a false one. By means of it the cement of Christianity has become the bone of contention. The discovery of truth is a mere accident, while heresy or individual choice is a duty; and, by a climax of paradoxes, contradiction never rages more fiercely than around the central Rite of unity and love.

We admit, indeed, that all this was foreseen by Jesus Christ, and in a certain sense willed by Him. It was willed as the punishment of those who should turn their backs upon His Church. God has so inspired the Holy Scriptures that they are a mystery and a secret to the learning which scorns submission. He will not allow them to give up their meaning to those who have forsaken unity and broken charity. He gave the New Testament, a shrine containing an inestimable treasure, and He gave the key of Tradition by which to unlock it. But He will not have the lock picked, or the treasure possessed by those who reject the key.

If we now look for the source of the peculiar obscurity of the New Testament, with regard to doctrine and Ritual, it is not difficult to discover. The New Testament, having been written for men well

instructed in Christianity, naturally and providentially omits whatever was superfluous for such men. And - also providentially - there is absolutely no other means of supplying these - omissions but by Christian Tradition.

When we examine a history, the first question to be settled is, whether it was written for those previously ignorant of the facts it professes to narrate, or for those conversant with them: for to read a history correctly, we must read it with the eyes of those for whom it was written. If we find that they were in ignorance of the facts narrated, we shall expect to find full and precise information. If, however, the original readers were conversant with the facts, we shall expect to find many things of importance passed over, while more recondite details are dwelt upon, and hints and allusions made.

Now, the New Testament was certainly written for well-informed readers, conversant with the events it relates. It therefore omits much that would have been superfluous to narrate. Many fundamental doctrines and daily practices are taken for granted.

The question thus arises - can we supply the missing information? By Tradition we certainly can; but without it there is no means of doing so. The Gospels contain the only detailed record, besides Tradition, of the origin of Christianity. We can throw little light on their obscurities from conjecture, for in the whole history of the world there are no similar circumstances to give us any clue. Besides, God's ways are too mysterious for us to attempt to measure them by our own reason. Thus, if we reject the only key given us by God, we may try to pick the lock - but it will resist all our efforts.

And this peculiar structure of the Scriptures we should expect. If Jesus Christ came on earth to establish a Church; if He wished the members of that Church to be known as His disciples by their union - then He will take the means to secure this union. Such means we find to be a common faith delivered by a living authority, and the bonds of the same worship and sacraments. Neither in the written nor in traditional records of our Lord's life, are any other means appointed. The living Church is ever acting on the commission she received from Christ - "Go and teach all nations, baptising them." Tradition and Ritual are the great features of her charter. The

Scriptures she has received as a help to Tradition. In her hands alone are they intelligible and consistent.

And He who has inspired them for the use of His Church has taken precautions to prevent His truth from falling into the hands of those who abandon unity. He has inspired, not indeed a riddle, but a document which requires a key. He has intended that the vain efforts of talent and learning to dispense with the Church and yet retain the truth, should convince us still more of the value that He sets on humility and charity, i.e., a submission to and communion with His Church.

We will now come to some of the particular Rites of the Church, to the Sacraments. We shall see how little we can gather from the New Testament as to their exact nature and their use. We shall note, too, the intention of the writer in both statement and omission.

Baptism - A careful collation of the four Gospels would convince us that in the Christian Religion there was to be some important practice called Baptism: it was to be some kind of ceremony initiating men into the Christian Church. But we should be left in darkness as to much more.

All the Evangelists relate is that our Lord received baptism from John. John, however, contrasts his baptism of water with the baptism which Jesus would confer "of the Holy Ghost and of fire." We look for an account of this wondrous baptism. The water of John's baptism was figurative, yet all the same a material reality - not a metaphor. What, then, is the fire of the baptism of Jesus? Is it only a figure of speech, or not? The Evangelists do not answer. We find that Saint Luke and Saint John do not even allude to the institution of Christian baptism. Saint Mark barely mentions it, in recording the words "He that believes and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Saint Matthew is the most explicit. He relates the precept to baptise believers " in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But he does not explain the meaning of these words, though the formula occurs nowhere else in his Gospel. He does not explain the ceremony at all.

The necessary conclusion from these passages is that the Evangelists

did not intend to teach the nature of baptism, that they supposed the readers to be conversant with the subject. The prominence of Baptism in the Gospels is exactly in inverse proportion to its importance. There could be no reason to say much on a subject which, for the very reason of its importance, was so well known to all. They had all been baptised; they had seen the Sacrament administered several times; they knew the character of its ceremonies; they were thoroughly acquainted with the doctrine concerning it. Saint Matthew just tells them the precise occasion when our Lord instituted it, but says no more. But our Lord Himself must have taught the Apostles much more about Baptism. That teaching has not been lost - Tradition has preserved it for us.

The other books of the New Testament bear out the same conclusion. Saint Paul found at Ephesus certain disciples who had not heard of the Holy Ghost, but had been baptised with the baptism of John. "Having heard these things, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them" (Acts 19).

Here is certainly a glimpse of a religious system in which the practice of Ritual plays an important part. But everything is told by allusions. What is the meaning of baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus"? Was the imposition of hands an essential part of it? Again the written Word does not tell us.

In the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we read how Philip the Deacon "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian eunuch. What is contained in these words? Simply belief in Jesus' dying for sinners? "See, here is water: what doth hinder me from being baptised." So, preaching Jesus, included preaching Baptism. "To preach Jesus" was a technical phrase, whose meaning was well known to those for whom Saint Luke wrote.

In the Epistles we have many allusions to Christian Baptism, but they are only allusions. We are told there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"; this shows its importance, but not its nature. The Corinthians are reminded, "In one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles," etc. In the Epistle to the Colossians we read: "Buried with Him in baptism, in whom also you are risen again"; in that to the Romans: "Know you not that all we

that are baptised in Christ Jesus are baptised in His death." Then we have the strange question "What shall they do that are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not again at all?" (1st Corinthians 15:29.) But all this gives us very scanty information as to the nature or external form of the Sacrament.

We might here quote appropriately some remarks of Locke's in his "Reasonableness of Christianity" - "The Epistles were writ to those who were in the faith and true Christians already, and so could not be designed to teach them the fundamental articles and points necessary to salvation. . . . And they were writ upon particular occasions, and without those occasions had not been writ, and so cannot be thought necessary to salvation - though they, resolving doubts and reforming mistakes, are of great advantage to our knowledge and practice."

Holy Communion - We can apply the same test to the Holy Eucharist. In what way did its Institutor, Jesus Christ, intend that His disciples in future ages should learn its nature and its manner of administration?

Clearly not, at first, from Holy Scripture. For it took many generations for the various books of the New Testament to be sifted, their authority, settled, and the canon drawn up. But even afterwards, with the whole New Testament at their disposal, men could learn little in detail of this Sacrament.

Saint John says not one word about its institution. Saint Matthew and Saint Mark record our Lord's own act, but we could not conjecture from them that the ceremony our Lord performed was to be an institution among Christians. They do not record the words "This do for a commemoration of Me." They give neither command, counsel, nor permission to repeat the action. The recipients of these Gospels could not have gathered in any way that there was to be a Christian rite called Holy Communion.

Saint Luke narrates, indeed, how our Lord, after breaking bread and saying, "This is My Body," added "Do this for a commemoration of Me." Those who read his Gospel would have studied his account of the rite attentively, in order to know how to perform it. They would

notice that Saint Luke, in speaking of the cup, does not renew the injunction: so, not unnaturally, they would suppose that that was no part of the future rite. Only when, perhaps later, they came across Saint Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, they would discover their mistake. He alone tells us that Jesus Christ commanded the-cup also to be used in this commemoration.

But did no one know of this till Saint Paul had written this Epistle - many years after our Lord's Ascension? Certainly the Apostle: did not write with the intention of making it known. He says that he had already delivered to them the doctrine, by word of mouth - and the reason why he again recalls the institution is to urge certain moral conclusions, especially in reference to the abuse of the "love feasts."

How then, in the face of all this, can it be asserted that the Scriptures contain all things necessary for our knowledge? The great central rite of the Christian religion, viewed only in the light given us by a Scriptures, is hopelessly obscure - and no man would know how to celebrate it.

Other Rites - Other rites are mentioned in the New Testament besides Baptism and Holy Communion. So we must now ask ourselves whether Holy Scripture, without Tradition, tells us anything about the number and relative importance of the various parts of Ritual? It is as necessary to know the place and importance of a rite as to know its nature and external form. Which are to be temporary, and which of permanent institution? Are they counselled only, or of strict obligation? Are they for all men, or only for a class? Holy Scripture leaves us very much in the dark about these matters.

There are two ceremonies which hold a conspicuous place in the Bible narrative - yet, rightly or wrongly, they are omitted among Protestants. Let us consider the Washing of the Feet, and the Anointing of the Sick. A perfectly impartial, unprejudiced reader, confining himself strictly to the New Testament, would select the "Washing of the Feet" as one of the principal rites of Christian observance. Saint John records it in the most circumstantial detail. It is performed in a very striking and emphatic manner by Jesus

Christ, on the very eve of His Death. He seems to make it essential to fellowship with Himself. "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me" (John 13:8). He seems to impose a formal precept of its ee "You ought also to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." He seems to insinuate some mysterious meaning or virtue in it beyond what lies on the surface. "What I do, thou knowest not now: but thou shalt know hereafter."

Why then is this apparent precept not fulfilled? Washing of the feet, it is said, was an oriental custom, a token of hospitality and of kindness in our Lord's time and country. His action must be taken as merely an oriental mode of teaching charity and humility - it is symbolic. But surely such reasoning is rash in the extreme! Could not He have adopted a natural or Eastern rite, and have elevated it to a supernatural dignity, and made it of universal obligation? Was not a supper on bread and wine a natural repast before our Lord's institution of Holy Communion? Was not baptism an Eastern usage, raised by Christ to a new meaning and dignity, and promulgated for all nations?

Or are Protestants here illogically, and against their own principles, following Tradition? Catholic Tradition tells us this is no Sacrament, no obligatory rite. The words of our Lord: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," point to a subsequent and supplemental information which was to be the key to what is recorded by Saint John. That key was given by the Apostles to the Church by Tradition. By that we know that the washing of the feet is not an eighth Sacrament.

Let us turn now to the anointing of oil mentioned by Saint James. "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:14,15).

The Catholic Church, and the oriental millions separated from the Church for fourteen centuries, account this ceremony a Sacrament instituted by our Lord to confer grace on the sick till the end of time. Protestants hold it to be a miraculous and merely temporary

rite. Our repetition of it is called by the Anglicans "a corrupt following of the Apostles." Yet what warrant of Scripture have they that their own neglect of it is not a corrupt disobedience of the Apostles? They rely solely on their own critical conjectures. And those conjectures, at their best, are very dubious. The Apostle seems to give a universal rule, "Is *any* sick?"; whereas the grace of healing could be only exercised on certain occasions. He speaks of calling in the priests, whereas the power of healing was not granted to all of them or to them exclusively. He speaks of forgiveness of sins, which certainly seems to belong to an interior benefit conferred on all ages, rather than to an external grace belonging to a certain epoch. And the Church throughout the world has so understood it. Is the Protestant so sure of his ground, so sure that he and the small sect to which he belongs is right in their interpretation, and all the rest of Christendom is wrong - that he is quite prepared to go before his Judge "Unhouseled, disappointed, unanel'd"? Then his rashness is appalling indeed.

So we find that many zealous ministers in the Anglican Church would bring back the use of this Sacrament to their people. But what can we think of a Church that has all these centuries discarded one of Christ's Sacraments? What shall we say of her care for her dying children?

However, the attempt to revive Extreme Unction, without the traditions and authority of the Catholic Church, is little less rash than was the first abandonment contrary to all tradition. Its obligation can be shown from Scripture, but not the precise manner of administering it. No one can pretend that Saint James was giving full information as to this Sacrament: it was already constantly received and administered. There is scarcely a word of the Apostle's which does not suggest a question.

"Is any man sick?" What degree of sickness is required? Must there be imminent danger of death? If recovery has taken place, and then a relapse, can it be received a second time?

"Let him bring in." Must the patient himself express the desire? Or can his will be interpreted by others if he is insensible?

"The priests of the Church." The Apostle uses the plural form. How

many priests are necessary?

"Let them pray over him." Is there any prescribed form of prayer?

"Anointing him." The whole body? Or what part?

"With oil." What kind of oil? Any oil?

"The Lord shall raise him up." Does this refer to body or soul?

"If he be in sins." Are all sins included? What are the conditions of forgiveness?

We might go on multiplying such questions. But we cannot answer them merely by conjecture - and no other part of Holy Scripture explains them. The living tradition of the Church alone can furnish the answer.

The Canon and the Code

We have said that a part of the Ritual is necessarily older than the New Testament, and independent of it. How, then, can we distinguish between Ritual divinely instituted, and human additions and corruptions?. Even if we could trace some doctrine or practice back to the earliest ages, could it not still be a primitive corruption or at least a merely human element introduced into the divine? So some have denied the authority of Tradition of any kind unless confirmed by Holy Scripture.

But this, of course, is not the Catholic view. Divine Tradition is the Word of God no less than Scripture. The written and unwritten Word . may support and explain each other, but they have equal authority.

We reply to the above difficulties that we have the same means of sifting traditions and verifying those that are authentic as we have of sifting the early Christian writings and discerning between those that are inspired and those that are merely human. The apocryphal gospels and epistles, which abounded in the early ages of Christianity, do not disprove the authentic writings of the Apostles. Neither do apocryphal traditions throw doubt on authentic and divine traditions.

Our Canon of Scripture and our Code of Ritual are drawn up by the same means, by the same authority and with the same certainty.

There are doubtless, at the present day, difficulties attending the historical evidences of both. The oral testimony of Apostolic men died with them. The living tradition of Apostolic Churches, though it survives in its results, can no longer be tested in itself. Many important historical documents have perished. We have not at hand the materials on which the Church of the third or fourth centuries passed judgment: that judgment can never be revised. We must accept it, both for our Canon of Scripture and our Code of Ritual, as final and divine - or we must lapse into hopeless scepticism. There are no greater historical difficulties about the seven Sacraments than about the fourteen epistles of Saint Paul. Those who decline to

admit the Church's infallibility, or in other words the fulfilment of God's promises to her, will seek in vain for literary or scientific certainty. They will become the sport of caprice or of fashion; and we shall have, on the one hand, Luther proclaiming the Epistle of Saint James to be an "Epistle of straw," and on the other, the Church of England calling the Sacrament of Extreme Unction "a corrupt following of the Apostles." Nay, we have so-called Christians asserting that the practice of celibacy is Pauline and not Christian! With them nothing is inspired but the words of Christ Himself, and have not the Evangelists coloured them with their own ideas? So true is it that the Bible cannot stand without the Church.

Now let us consider the reason of God's making Tradition and Scripture complementary one to the other.

In many things we must be satisfied with knowing the fact of God's Providence, without being able to fathom its intrinsic reason. The poor little mind of man can never understand fully the ways of Infinite Wisdom. God's thoughts and ways are above us, just as the heavens are above the earth. It is the Catholic belief that God inspired the sacred writers both as to what they say and as to what they omit; and there are many cases when we can discover deep and beautiful wisdom in an omission. But in many instances, likewise, we shall be at a loss to know why great prominence is given to certain things and others are passed over.

However, a careful and reverent examination of the structure of historical books will reveal to us the method which directed the historians in their statements and omissions.

They seem to have described in detail those things that were transitory, and to have passed over lightly those that were permanent - for these latter could speak for themselves. The Birth, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ were transitory actions; they were to take place once only. They were ever to be remembered, but never to be repeated. Now, though these great facts are commemorated in unwritten tradition, and bound up with the Ritual of the Church, yet the circumstances which attended them were such as could scarcely have been transmitted safely and in detail without writing. And as God wished them to be remembered, He inspired the Evangelists to enter into the fullest

detail in relating them.

So also with the words of our Lord. Many besides those now known may have been in the mouths of the first Christians, like those which Saint Paul quoted to the elders at Ephesus - "It is a more blessed thing to give, rather than to receive." But for ages the memory of them has perished. We conclude that God inspired the Evangelists to record all such words of His Divine Son as He wished to communicate to future ages. This conclusion does not militate against the belief that the teaching involved in these words was not lost, but handed down by Tradition. But when we turn to the second class of things, those which are of their own nature permanent, we find a different plan followed. "The things of the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3) are referred to, but not related in detail. The government and hierarchy of the Church, her worship, her sacraments and rites, were to be visible and imperishable institutions. They would bear witness to themselves - tell their own tale. They would thus be familiar and well known to all those for whom the historians wrote. It was natural, therefore, to omit them, or merely to mention their first origin, or to refer to them by allusion.

Again, among familiar things, were the great doctrines of the Faith: they are everywhere supposed, and seldom spoken of explicitly. Perhaps of all matters connected with Scripture this is the most important to bear well in mind.

Take, for example, Saint Luke's method in the Acts of the Apostles. When he gives an abridgment of an Apostle's discourse in a Jewish synagogue or in a heathen market-place, he merely details the process by which the Apostles insinuated themselves into their hearers' minds. As this process would vary according to circumstances, it would not be known to Saint Luke's readers. They would remember how the Apostles succeeded with themselves; they would be glad to know how they had succeeded with others. This, therefore, would be exactly the kind of information Saint Luke would be likely to give. But when once the Apostles had found docile hearers, their instructions would be much the same everywhere. Saint Luke's readers had personal experience of those instructions - there was no need to repeat them: it would have been

wearisome to do so. Saint Paul, preaching to the Jews, said nothing to them about the Unity of God - which he did to the heathen. The Jews believed this already. So Saint Luke thought it needless to tell Christians the Apostle taught his converts the Trinity of Persons - his Christian readers knew the Apostle's doctrine already. It would have been almost an impertinence in Saint Luke had he wearied his readers with the first elements of Christianity, and with repetition of the facts of their daily experience.

If Christians then had been divided, like Protestants now, into a multitude of sects - one affirming, the other denying, Jesus Christ to be God; one adoring, the other rejecting, a Trinity of Persons; one believing baptism to be an efficacious Sacrament, the other regarding it as a mere figure; one believing in and worshipping the Real Presence, the other calling such worship idolatrous - if such had been the condition of the first Christians, then Saint Luke would probably have adopted a very different method. He would have enlarged on the precise meaning given to the articles of faith controverted among his readers.

But Saint Luke was writing to men who, like Catholics of today, were united in faith. To his readers the facts and truths of Christianity were objective, undisputed realities, clearly and universally admitted. He therefore adopts exactly the style which Catholics make use of under similar circumstances. If two converts to the Catholic Faith compare notes on their conversion, they will dilate on the points in which they differed, on the events or the train of reflections which led them to seek admission into the Church. But they will not waste time in asking each other about the nature of the creed they were taught or the form of their reception. They know they were both taught the same creed, and both admitted by the same ceremonies. If a foreign missionary writes home to his Catholic friends, he dwells on his adventures, and the arguments he used to convince the pagan. But he does not tire his readers by repeating the Apostles' Creed each time he narrates a conversion. One might read through a volume of the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith without meeting a single reference to many Catholic beliefs. The last book from which a reasonable man would think of gathering a full and precise notion of the Catholic creed and discipline would be those very historical letters which

everywhere presuppose them.

Some most important consequences follow from this structure of Holy Scripture. Though Catholics contend that nearly all their doctrines and practices are to be found in the Bible, either explicitly or in allusion, in germ or in principle; yet they know quite well that much that is plain in Councils is obscure in Scripture, that the relative importance of certain doctrines and practices in the Church does not always correspond with the relative prominence given them in the New Testament.

There is nothing whatever to perplex a Catholic in the fact that nowhere in the New Testament is it explicitly stated that there are Three Persons in God, distinct, yet of one nature - or that Confirmation is a sacrament - or that Confession is the only plank after making shipwreck of baptismal innocence, and so forth.

Neither the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, nor the Epistles are formal treatises on the Christian Faith. Therefore we do not look for formal statements of elementary truths. We take, not from them, but to them, our belief in the Blessed Trinity, and it unlocks many a passage; we take to them our belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and it makes everything plain; we take to them our belief in the Sacraments, and we find just those indications which we should expect to find under the circumstances in which they were written.

But what of the Protestant theory? If the Bible were intended to be the sole source of knowledge of Christian revelation - then, not only would all necessary truths and Christian practices find clear statement there, but they would hold the relative prominence that they do in the mind of God. Will Protestants maintain that this is the case? Will those who believe in the Divinity of the Holy Ghost and in the duty of worshipping Him maintain that this is taught as formally in the Bible and as in their own pulpits? Does the Sunday observance stand out as prominently in the Bible as it does in the practice of good Protestants? Nowadays, they are discovering more and more inconsistencies, and discarding doctrines and practices of their forefathers - on the plea of greater conformity to the Bible. But surely this may only lead to wider departure from real and primitive. Christianity. When a creed or rule of life is drawn exclusively from a document in which the essential parts of the

system are omitted or mentioned only in allusion, while minor details occupy an ample space - there is every likelihood that the minor points will get an undue importance, while the essential things will be put into the background, or be neglected altogether.

Saint Paul, for instance, complains to the Hebrews that they are still children requiring to be fed with milk, that is, to have the rudiments of the Christian faith and morals repeated to them. He thinks the oral instruction they have received ought to have done this. He determines to write an epistle to men, not a catechism for children. "Wherefore," he says, "leaving the word of the beginning of Christ"' (as Catholics would say - "What every Christian ought to know,") "let us go on to things more perfect, not laying again the foundation." He does not want to repeat in his Epistle the foundation or fundamental truths of Christianity. He merely indicates what that foundation is: "Not laying again the foundation of penance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of imposition of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Hebrews 6:1,2).

He here places the doctrine concerning Ritual as among the foundations of Christianity, those elementary truths and facts which ought to be familiar to every Christian through the living tradition, and which find, therefore, no place in his Epistle.

Is it not evident, then, that if men, forgetting this structure of the Epistles, go to them as to a catechism for an exposition of the whole Christian system, or look in them for the fundamental things, they will expose themselves to the most serious mistakes. Allusions will certainly be misunderstood; and even when the meaning of what is clear is attained, it will be perverted by the unnatural position which is assigned to it. So Saint Peter tells us that in Saint Paul's Epistles are certain things "hard to be understood, which the unlearned and the unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." And he immediately adds the warning: "You, therefore, brethren, knowing these things before, take heed, lest being led aside by the error of the unwise, you fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"' (2 Peter 3:16-18). The existence of the obscurities here alluded to proves them to be

designed by God. We must believe that God inspired Saint Paul to write thus obscurely. But the fact of the danger to which these obscurities expose the unlearned and unstable ought to convince anyone that God has provided a remedy against the danger. Saint Peter shows what the remedy is. He tells his disciples not to let the interpretation of difficult passages make them "fall from their steadfastness," i.e., abandon their firm adherence to the doctrine and discipline which they have received orally from their teachers. If they hold fast to Tradition they may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ," by reading the Scriptures. If they cast aside Tradition, Scripture will only make still broader for them the road that leads to "destruction." To those who are steadfast to the Tradition, the very difficulties of Scripture will be a powerful help to grow in grace. They will exercise their patience, and excite their attention, and produce most fruitful labour. But, of course, these are exercises, not for the unlearned and unstable, but for those who are settled in the faith.

The Alleged Corruption of Christian Tradition

The history of Religion, according to the ordinary Protestant view, is an immense anticlimax. Judaism is a partial success. Christianity is a catastrophe. In Milton's "Paradise Lost," the Archangel Michael draws out for Adam the long history of posterity. In grand scriptural pictures, the four thousand years of preparation pass in review. All progresses in the expectation of the promised Deliverer. He comes, He dies, rises triumphant, and ascends into Heaven. Adam exclaims in rapture:

> "O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
> That all this good of evil shall produce."

But his raptures are premature: he asks Michael what is to follow the preaching of the Apostles. Great and glorious things, doubtless! The Archangel tells of the descent of the Holy Ghost, the gift of tongues and of miracles.

> "Thus they win
> Great numbers of each nation to receive
> With joy the tidings brought from Heaven; at
> length,
> Their ministry perform'd, and race well run,
> Their doctrine and their story written left,
> They die."

But as soon as Michael - Milton's Michael, of course - leaves Scripture, and takes the Protestant view of history, how changed is the scene! Scarcely are the Apostles dead, when wicked men

> "The truth
> With superstitions and traditions taint,
> Left only in those written records pure,
> Though not but by the Spirit understood.
> Whence heavy persecution shall arise
> On all who in the worship persevere
> Of spirit and truth; the rest - far greater part -

Will deem in outward rites and specious forms
Religion satisfied."

And Adam, after hearing this sad prophecy, can exclaim:

"Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
Greatly in peace of thought."

How different and how consoling is the Catholic view of God's Providence! And how account for these differences of view?

The Catholic Church reads Scripture in the light of her own history. Fulfilments interpret prophecies, and facts give meaning to words.

With Protestants, the testimony of history is set aside in favour of private interpretation, and then the private interpretation necessitates a new view of history.

We will take an example of this from the author of a work entitled, "Liber Librorum." He affirms that the Apostles founded no society bearing any resemblance to the Catholic Church. Then he asks - How came such an institution into being? He admits that "nothing can be plainer than that, about one hundred years after the death of Saint John, it appears in anything but Apostolic garb."

The obvious answer would be that it appears thus, not because it then started into existence, but because the historical documents that attest its existence become more numerous.

Moreover, the change of garb is only in the author's brain, as he contrasts the testimony of history with the fanciful vision of Apostolic Christianity which he has built for himself. By the end of that one century after Saint John's death he says "all is altered." Then he quotes Dean Stanley: "No other change equally momentous has ever since affected the fortunes of the Church; yet none has ever been so silent and so secret." This may well be said, if the Apostles taught Protestant doctrine, since no vestige whatever can be found of such in the early ages of the Church! Newman wrote in the Introduction to his Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine: "Whatever be historical Christianity, it is not Protestantism. If ever there was a safe truth, it is this. And Protestantism has ever felt it.

This is shown in the determination of dispensing with historical Christianity altogether, and of forming a Christianity from the Bible alone. Men would never have put it aside, unless they had despaired of it." The great Cardinal then quotes from his "Church of the Fathers" - "If such a system of doctrine as the Protestant would now introduce ever existed in early times, it had been clean swept away, as if by a deluge, suddenly, silently, and without memorial - by a deluge coming in a night, and utterly soaking, rotting, heaving up, and hurrying off every vestige of what it found in the Church before cock-crowing. . . and the deluge has in its turn disappeared itself - it has been swallowed up by the earth mercilessly as itself was merciless."

When first the notion was proclaimed in Europe that the Catholic Church had corrupted her ways and betrayed the deposit of truth, men asked in surprise when this had taken place, and how far back in the ages they were to look for pure Christianity. Some of the innovators claimed five, others six, and some even seven centuries from the death of the Apostles. Very soon, however, it was found safer to declare that the conversion of the nations in the fourth century had proved fatal to the Gospel. Afterwards it was granted that even in anti-Nicene times the evil was accomplished. Now it is confessed that by the end of the first century "all was altered," and the "momentous change" was effected. The enemy has abandoned rampart after rampart of history, and retreated to the citadel of the Bible. He seems to be preparing even to abandon that, though he is determined to blow it up, rather than to leave us to occupy it.

If all was altered by the end of the first century, of course the alteration must have been in process long before. Yes, says the author. of "Liber Librorum," "One of the greatest historical facts of the world is the existence and influence of a departure from the faith, which, working unseen during the later portions of the Apostolic age, rapidly developed after the decease of the last member of the sacred college into that mystery of iniquity which culminated in Rome" (p. 120).

So Popery was at work in the later portions of the Apostolic age! Renan only goes a little further back in tracing Popery to the later teaching of Jesus Christ Himself. Renan, at least, is consistent, for

he holds Christ to be a mere man. But how those who hold that He was more than man can reconcile this with their theory of the corruption of Christianity, it is not easy to see. Jesus Christ had said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Yet we are told that it did pass away, except from paper, by the end of a century or two. Did He foresee that in a very short time Tradition would be corrupted, and that it would be impossible for men to know the truth except by the study of the Bible? Did He, accordingly, make no provision for the diffusion of the Bible? Did He allow the possession of the Bible, except by a very few, to be simply impossible for fourteen hundred years? In a word, did He say His Word should never pass away, and then make that Word inaccessible to nearly all? If so, Renan surely should make many converts! Christ came down from Heaven to teach us divine truth, and He has left no infallible channel by which that truth can come to us through the ages!

It is strange that men who hold these opinions should attempt to do what, according to them, Jesus Christ and His Apostles could not do - to establish the reign of truth on earth. Saint Francis of Sales, speaking to the early Protestants who were thinking of evangelising the heathen, said: "What! if Augustine, and Chrysostom, and Ambrose, and Gregory, and so many others could not prevent the Church from tumbling on its face shortly after their time, what chance is there that your weak little Church will ever grow to maturity under the nursing of your pastors, who in learning and sanctity certainly cannot be compared with the ancient doctors? Such a hope would be vain indeed, and none but yourselves could entertain it! If the Church in its springtime and its prime was not fruitful, as you tell us, shall we expect to gather fruits from it in the winter of its old age? If it staggered in its youth, where will it run to in its decrepitude?" (Controverses, discourse 63.)

Now, a few words to those who maintain Tradition, but only that of the early Church - who would appeal from the teaching of the Church of today to that of the Church in its infancy. If there is one point on which all antiquity is most certainly agreed, it is that Christians must look to the Church of their own day for the solution of controversies, for ecclesiastical discipline, and for the divine worship. The' Fathers appealed to the past to defend, but never to

reject - or correct the present Church.

We have already seen that the knowledge of Scripture Ritual was to be acquired from the living Ritual. What matters it that the Ritual referred to was that of the Apostolic or sub-Apostolic age? It was the Ritual before the eyes of those who first read the Scriptures; the Ritual in which they had been baptised, and in which they daily worshipped.

If we who live in the twentieth century are to go back to past ages, and to search among ancient monuments for a key which has been lost, we are certainly not following the method of those very men to whom we appeal, who held the key in their own hands. We are not following the method intended by the sacred writers. It may, of course, be maintained that such is the misfortune of our present position, that this is the only method left to us. This is obviously an intelligible position; but it is an acknowledgment that Religion has utterly changed its nature since the days of the Apostles. We Catholics mean, by an Apostolic Church, a Church whose method as well as doctrine is Apostolic; a Church now in possession of Apostolic truth, Apostolic doctrine, and Apostolic worship; not one which looks for these in the surviving fragments of a past tradition.

If, then, a Catholic is asked where the true religion of Jesus Christ may be found, he will certainly not refer the inquirer to the fifth or sixth century of Christianity, or talk about an undivided Church, past or future. He would reply in the words of the epitaph to Sir Christopher Wren in Saint Paul's Cathedral, *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*. Look round you at the Catholic Church, which is the Building of Jesus Christ. Look well at her institutions, her government, her worship, her Ritual, and remember Who it was that said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away."

Saint Luke tells us that "for forty days, after His Resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to His Apostles, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God" (Acts 1). We seek for these words spoken to the Apostles in vain in Gospel or Epistle. Were they lost entirely? They were spoken to the builders of the Church by the great Architect, who said: "On this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "He spoke of the kingdom of God." He drew up

the chart of its constitution; He laid down its fundamental laws. Become a citizen of that kingdom, and you will not only know but enjoy the Word spoken by its King.

This is the Catholic plan; it is also that of reason and of Scripture. But others will not adopt it. They say: "I like not yonder building, though I venerate the Architect. It bears His name by immemorial tradition. But I hold Him not responsible for it. The builders de parted from His plan, and spoilt His work. See! here I have an unfinished ground-plan which is certainly His, and I have also an imperfect journal of His life. I have, therefore, put the building completely from my thoughts. I am convinced the Architect's intention was never hitherto understood - not even by those who lived with Him and worked under His directions. So we will demolish the building; and then we - after nineteen hundred years - will exercise our ingenuity on His plans, and build up a better Church, such as He intended."

So they talk, but while each has his own views about the Architect's plans, and cannot agree even in the outlines, they reconstruct nothing.

Others acknowledge that the original builders worked according to the instructions they received. But they do not like the building as it now stands. Much has been added to it, they say, by later hands. It needs not to be demolished, but to be renovated. And to know how the restoration is to be made, they go back to history, and they look to old drawings and consult old descriptions. But neither are they agreed. They do not know how far back they must go to reform it. The accounts are so many, and so difficult to reconcile, that they are ever furnishing new matter of doubt.

Besides, all the accounts have some very troublesome omissions. It seems there was an agreement among the builders to speak very cautiously, and in very obscure terms, which could only be comprehended by the initiated, about certain parts of the building. This was called the "Discipline of the Secret," and it is a sore puzzle to our antiquarian reformers.

But what hinders them altogether from agreement is their peculiar way of studying. Since the present cathedral is before their eyes, it

would be but natural to look at it; and by means of it' to explain both the plan of the founder and the obscure allusions in the ancient records. - Yet how few people, who are not Catholics, ever give a serious look at the Catholic Church! Books are written on Religion, and not a Catholic writer quoted! For many, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and Saint Augustine - not to speak of other great lights of the Church - are as if they had never existed!

No! to look too closely might compel them to admit that the building has simply grown into what it was intended to be, and thus they could exercise no private judgment, and attempt no reform. For the Architect never said that His - work should be spoilt or should want reforming; but simply "I am ever with you to the consummation of the world." Oh! how futile is this attempt to correct the present by the past! If the living Church of the twentieth century has lost primitive truth, abandoned primitive worship, and rejected primitive discipline, on what theory of Divine Providence can we expect that, amid the immense destruction of early Christian writings and monuments, God would have preserved just enough to enable antiquarian research to bring back His Church to her primitive model?

The testimonies of the Fathers, the ancient liturgies, the monuments of the Catacombs, and other fragments of primitive Christianity which time has spared, are of great interest and use to confirm and defend our faith. But the Faith itself must rely neither on the private interpretation of the incomplete record of God's Revelation found in the New Testament, nor on the similar interpretation of equally incomplete remains of antiquity. "The whole counsel of God" is declared only by the living Church, in whose hands alone both Scripture and Tradition, the Canon and the Code, are complete and fitted for their purpose.

God intended that we should look back upon Scripture from the Communion of the Church, not that we should measure the living Church, or build up a Church of the future, from our own conceptions of Scripture. If we give our own meaning to the words of Jesus Christ, then they are as words uttered to no purpose - save to be the occasion of error and the subject of dispute. But if we believe they are indeed God's words - words of power and life,

creative words, words . that shall never pass away - and in this belief look for their meaning in their realisation - how grand is the New Testament!

We are a Church that fills the world today, and that has filled history for well nigh nineteen hundred years, against which the powers of the world are striving and have ever striven. That Church knows that her life is in her commission: "Go, teach all nations"; that her strength is in the promise "I am with you all days." How wonderful are these words thus read in their fulfilment!

We see presiding over that Church one who claims descent from Peter! He is the visible foundation of the Church, while he is the stone of stumbling to all her enemies. How the Catholic heart beats when it recalls the words: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

We read how Jesus Christ foretold that "penance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all nations" (Luke 24:47). We see the historical fulfilment of these words in the Sacraments of Baptism and of Penance. We remember how another Evangelist tells us of a power conferred: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). And we know that those words are the germ of the mighty tree which spreads its branches before our eyes.

We open the Church's catalogue of her saints, and we find that they belong to every age and every clime, and we remember who said: "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11). We note how, above all the rest, one name is held in benediction. We see how devotion to the Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ has struck its roots deep into the hearts of all the children of the Catholic Church. We recognise this is but the historical fulfilment of Mary's own inspired words: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." And we too, with her, magnify the Lord who has done great things to His humble handmaid - and bless her who is all blessed.

Or, lastly, we witness the worship which in every country has for ages been offered to God - the offering of "the clean oblation" in "every place" "from the rising of the sun to the going down"

(Malachi 1:11), and all the rites which cluster round the Holy Sacrifice. And we remember how, nineteen hundred years ago, the Son of God said: "Woman, believe Me that the hour cometh when you shall neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem adore the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore Him" (John 4:21,23). And we doubt not that the Father has found those whom He sought, that in every country He has found true adorers, and that the worship He everywhere finds - of which Catholic Ritual is a part, is the worship in spirit and in truth foretold by the Son of God.

May He grant, in His own good time, that all Christians may become worshippers in spirit and in truth. And may the prayers of her who is called "the destroyer of heresies" hasten this happy consummation!

About This EBook

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